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THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 14 August, 1932 Number 8

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Notes of the Month

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R. P. D.

The Bradford I.L.P. Conference and After

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A COTTON WORKER

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Events are moving so rapidly throughout the world situation that the significance and urgency of Anti-War Day, 1932, needs no emphasis. The imperialist war-front is forming ever more closely—Lausanne, Geneva, Ottawa and the projected London Economic Conference are all stages in this process. At the same time, the intensified capitalist offensive against the workers is being pushed forward. The workers need to be prepared on every front.

The immediate issues which demand attention are so numerous and manifold that it is necessary this month to break away from the customary form of these Notes of a general survey, and concentrate, in a very brief and summary form, on some of the outstanding questions, in particular : (1) *Anti-War Day and the United Front ;* (2) *Lausanne, Geneva and the War Crisis ;* (3) *the Ottawa Conference ;* (4) *the Independent Labour Party Special Conference at Bradford.*

Anti-War Day and the United Front

ANTI-WAR Day comes this year at the height of a continuous anti-war campaign and developing war-crisis. The growing awakening of the workers, in the face of both the closely connected capitalist offensive and the direct war-moves of imperialism, is witnessed in the rising note of militancy at all working-class conferences. The anti-war campaign is no longer confined to the revolutionary minority, but is reaching considerable bodies of workers, as witnessed in the development of united front anti-war conferences all over the country, in the wide response to the International Anti-War Congress, and in the unanimous adoption by the delegates to the National Union of Railwaymen's conference of the Communist resolution " to use the whole of our industrial force to check and stop the existing war policy of the present Government." *Nevertheless, all this is still only a beginning, and far behind the urgency of the situation.* The anti-war campaign has not yet reached that

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degree of burning consciousness throughout the working class which leads to the organisation of action. It is a long step from a paper resolution at a trade union conference (which is discreetly and cynically left unopposed by the social-fascist bureaucracy) to the active struggle, which can only be undertaken by the initiative of the workers themselves.

THE war-moves of Imperialism still go forward unchecked. Japan is strengthening its military base in Manchuria with feverish speed, and with the direct support of Britain and France; the Lytton Commission of the League of Nations, dominated by Britain and France, is reported by the *Times* correspondent in Tokyo to have reached the conclusion that, since Japan is determined on the separation of Manchuria from China and its recognition as an "independent" state, the task of the Commission is thereby lightened, since "no sort of compromise solution is possible."

> The Commission's task was lightened by its finding that the Japanese Government had anchored its policy to the separation of Manchuria from China . . . From that standpoint, which the Commission found immoveable, it follows that no sort of compromise solution is possible. (*Times*, July 15, 1932.)

(The *Times* correspondent correctly did not stop to consider what should be the effect on the Commission's conclusions of the fact that Chinese opinion, including the opinion of the Manchurian population themselves, is equally "immovable" against Japan, since such opinion, not being backed by guns, can be suitably neglected by a League of Nations Commission.) At the same time the European united front of imperialism is being drawn close together, through a maze of secret agreements, "gentlemen's agreements," "confidential accords," and all the rest of the paraphernalia of secret diplomacy. The closer British imperialist grouping at Ottawa is being organised with the direct assistance of the Labour representatives. Alongside, the iron heel in India prepares also the Asiatic war-front; and a direct offensive is let loose against Ireland. Most serious of all are the steps now being taken in Germany.

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AT home, the capitalist offensive, the economy drive, the attacks on the miners, the railwaymen, the textile workers, the unemployed, the extension of tariffs, the moves for a rise in prices, go forward still unchecked; there is not yet any common front of organised resistance. There is no doubt that the discontent in the working class is intense, not only among the unemployed, but also among the employed workers. "There is to-day a growing seething discontent that will at any moment manifest itself," declared a delegate at the railwaymen's conference; and "this note recurred in speech after speech during the debate." (*Daily Herald*, July 6, 1932.) The Belgian mass strike against rationalisation and lower wages, and for the unemployed, which developed and spread like wildfire in face of all the attempts of the Socialist Party and trade union bureaucracy to stamp it out, and which brought into mobilisation and active violence all the armed forces of the state, is only a symptom of what lies below the surface in all the capitalist countries of Europe and America. The tendency to "left" resolutions at recent trade union conferences, although no pointer whatever for action, is an indication of the rising mood of the workers, which the leadership is endeavouring to satisfy with paper resolutions and heroic speeches. The prospect of large-scale struggles in the near future is increasing.

NEVERTHELESS, capitalism and the Labour bureaucracy are still in full control in all the leading countries. The Labour bureaucracy is still able at present to meet the rising mood of the masses with "left" manœuvres at conferences and public meetings; with "revolutionary" declarations of action in the event of war, in the resolution of the Second International (accompanied by a private discussion, as noted last month, of an exactly opposite character); in Britain, with the Labour speeches of the "end of gradualism," condemnations of the late Labour Government, proclamations of a "bold socialist policy," &c. (Presidential Address at the Labour Women's Conference, and all current Labour propaganda, *New Clarion*, &c.); with "militant" presidential

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addresses at the trade union conferences (Dobbie at the National Union of Railwaymen's Conference, Hutchinson at the Amalgamated Engineering Union's Conference), with resolutions for the 40-hour week and increased wages (Engineers), for the 36-hour week (Railwaymen), &c. Left Reformism, in the shape of the Independent Labour Party, is still able to endeavour to hide the bankruptcy of reformism under the manœuvre of separation from the Labour Party and resounding "revolutionary" phrases, even to the extent of proclaiming a "definitely Marxist" basis (*New Leader*, July 15, 1932), while concealing its actual identity of programme with the Labour Party, and preaching defeatism in the actual struggle.

IN the face of all this, we need to redouble our efforts to win the workers from the deception of "left" phrases to the policy of active struggles; to awaken the consciousness of the urgent issues of the present struggle; to show the close connection of the capitalist offensive and the war-crisis; and to build up the united working-class front of active fight against the capitalist offensive and against the war offensive. This is the task that dominates Anti-War Day, 1932. *The task of Anti-War Day in the present year is not merely a preparatory mobilisation for the fight against war; it is a direct step in the building of the united working-class front of active struggle against the combined imperialist offensive, the economic offensive and the war offensive.*

Lausanne, Geneva and the War Crisis

WHAT is the significance of the events at Lausanne and Geneva in relation to the developing war-crisis? *Lausanne represents the closer drawing together of the united imperialist front in Europe.* We had already written two months back (June Notes) that the rôle of Lausanne would prove to be that of "gathering the European Imperialist Powers to endeavour to reach their common front," and that the formal issue of reparations and debts was in reality subordinate to this wider purpose:

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> What is the business of the Lausanne Conference? Ostensibly, the question of debts and reparations. But the question of debts and reparations is itself only a counter for deeper issues. It is common ground that there is no question of the possibility of payment from Germany in the immediate future; the question as such is only a hypothetical question of the further future. But behind the question lie other issues and antagonisms, the relations of Germany to Britain and France, to the Versailles Treaty, to the anti-Soviet bloc, the relations of the European Powers to the United States.

Following up this line a month later (July Notes), at a time when current press comment was speaking widely of the prospective "breakdown" of the Lausanne Conference as simply "another of the interminable reparations conferences," we had occasion to say, against such a view, that "in fact, the signs point to a closer drawing together of the imperialist front, despite the antagonisms," and that the outcome of Lausanne might be expected to be, both closer British-French co-operation, and possibly the effective drawing in of Germany.

THE facts of Lausanne have now shown how very much farther this process has gone than these expectations could attempt to envisage. For the gradual admissions following Lausanne have revealed that the official agreement announcing the termination of reparations and the future final payment of £150 millions, which was published first as the total outcome of the conference, was in reality only the least part of its results and of the real negotiations which were taking place. Step by step, the veil of MacDonald's secret diplomacy has been torn from him by Herriot and the French press, at any rate to the extent that it has suited the interests of these to enforce publicity. First, one agreement was found to lie behind the official agreement, and then another behind that. There is of course no guarantee that this is the end; and it may be assumed that there are other understandings, secret clauses and the like, which it did not suit French interests to force to be divulged, but which may be of decisive significance for the future war, just as with the old Entente (to which the whole process bears a marked similarity, with MacDonald and Snowden endeavouring to fulfil the rôles of

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Asquith and Grey, and with Lloyd George this time taking on the task of democratic opposition and demanding open diplomacy).

THE so-called "Gentlemen's Agreement," publication of which was finally after pressure agreed to with a great show of concession, was in fact by no means the most important of these agreements outside the treaty. This was in essence the registering of the united debtors' front, which it had been the continuous aim of British policy since the Balfour Note to organise; the Lausanne "settlement" was, as expected, revealed to be, no final settlement, but a pistol at the head of America. Hence the importance of the large language in the treaty about "*will* completely put an end to reparations" or MacDonald's "*can lead to* a settlement of this question of reparations"; so that either America will have to agree to full cancellation, or, failing that, the disappointment and odium can be fully placed on America. But this was only part of the unofficial agreements. Far more important was the quite separate "Confidential Pact," or "*accord de confiance*," as spoken of by Herriot.

THIS "Confidential Pact" of Britain and France, with invitations to Italy, Germany and Belgium to join, has not yet been published at the time of writing, but was described by Sir John Simon in his statement on July 13th as covering the following points: (1) British-French co-operation "on any questions coming to our notice similar in origin to that now settled at Lausanne which may affect the European régime"; (2) British-French co-operation on disarmament questions at Geneva; (3) British-French co-operation for the World Economic Conference, to be held with the United States; (4) no trade discrimination between Britain and France. It is already clear that these questions have reached far beyond the original "reparations" agenda of Lausanne, and cover the whole political field. It is a definite attempt to organise the united front of European Imperialism under British-French hegemony. The announcement, it was reported, came as a "thunderbolt" to the United

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States delegation at Geneva. On the other hand, the *Times* was careful to explain that " there is no idea of forming a united European front against America, nor is there any idea of forming an Anglo-French bloc against Germany " (July 14, 1932). The *Times* explicitly denies that the bloc is intended to be either anti-American or anti-German ; on the question of the relation of the bloc to the Soviet Union it remains silent.

ON the face of it, this development reflects *an extreme sharpening of the basic antagonism of imperialism, the Anglo-American antagonism*, which comes again strongly to the front as in 1927-8 (fiasco of the Geneva Naval Conference and Anglo-French Naval-Military Pact). Hoover's statement immediately after Simon's announcement directly regards the issue in this light :

> I wish to make it absolutely clear that the United States have not been consulted regarding any agreements reported by the press to have been concluded recently at Lausanne, and that of course it is not a party, nor in any way committed to any such agreement.
>
> While I do not assume it to be the purpose of any of these agreements to effect the combined action of our debtors, if it shall be so interpreted, then I do not propose that the American people shall be pressed into any line of action, or that our policy shall in any way be influenced by such a combination, whether open or implied. (Hoover letter to Borah, July 14, 1932.)

In this statement Hoover openly envisages an European " combination " against America, " the combined action of our debtors," and proclaims American full opposition and resistance. Along the same line, the *Times* Washington correspondent joyfully records that " a realist and not an isolationist policy will be forced upon " the American Government by the new developments :

> If Europe can or does hold together, if the Anglo-French Declaration draws yet other Powers within its orbit, it is assumed here that the question of American isolation, and of the acceptance of all that isolation would involve, may be presented to the " isolationists " of this country in rather uncomfortable form. . . . If agreement within Europe is reached, there will be no alternative to an increase in the armed strength of the United States to the point which isolation demands—with all that would imply of alarm in other parts of the Western Hemisphere and of domestic expense. (*Times*, July 15, 1932.)

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IT is here that Lausanne links up closely with Geneva. Both are revealed as direct fields of Anglo-American antagonism. Faced with the prospect of the combined European front at Lausanne, to enforce cancellation on America or expose America as the Shylock of the piece, America sought to get its own blow in first by the Hoover Disarmament proposals, presented on June 22, or within a few days after the meetings of Lausanne. To treat this caricature of the Soviet armaments-reduction proposals (all-round 50 per cent. reduction for the big Powers, graduated lesser reduction for the smaller countries, and no " police components " trickery) as a serious proposal for disarmament would be a folly fit only for the bourgeois pacifists, who were meant to be caught by the American bait and thus disorganise the European moral front : in fact, the " police component " basis would mean an increase of the American army from 140,000 to 200,000 ; while the naval proposals would serve the continuous American strategic aim of big ships and fewer (corresponding to the longer sea-routes and lack of coaling stations) as against the British aim of more ships and smaller, and thus weaken the relative position of Britain and Japan to America. But the proposal was designed to hit directly the British-French alliance, to hit the French army and the British navy as the two outstanding representatives of heavy armaments, to call the European moral bluff, and possibly to drive a rift in the British-French alliance by offering co-operation to Britain against French submarines and aircraft. The British-French-Japanese alliance, by being compelled to reject and stifle discussion of these proposals, was compelled to weaken its moral front for the future war, and to strengthen the American moral position as the supposed representative of " peace " and " disarmament " (with, in fact, the heaviest armaments expenditure of any Power).

NEVERTHELESS, it would be a mistake to see only the Anglo-American antagonism in these developments, or to assume that this antagonism has first place. Discussion of the British-French and European bloc

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has in public been turned solely on the question of whether or not the point is directed against America. *But in fact the point of the Lausanne Pact is likely to be found to be directed far more clearly and specifically against the Soviet Union.* Lausanne is a continuation of Locarno in an advanced stage. The weight of the Pact turns above all upon the first clause, the combination " on any questions which may affect the *European* régime "—and just this point has been stressed by the Government to show that the primary concern is not with America. The pressure on America is, not so much to antagonise or develop any direct fighting front against America, as to draw America into co-operation, to " force " America to abandon " isolation." And, indeed, the British Government, in answer to Churchill, claimed that effective contact with America was already established :

> We have been in touch at Lausanne not only with European representatives, but with representatives of the United States.
>
> In this rather delicate situation, we have no reason to think that the course we have taken is one which will lead to any of those unfortunate results which Mr. Churchill anticipates.
>
> (N. Chamberlain, House of Commons, July 11, 1932.)

How far this alleged co-operation (official denial of which was hastily issued from the American side) will actually go, remains to be seen. But it is clear that it is just the " European régime " side of the Lausanne Pact which it is most important to concentrate attention upon. " There may be other European questions," as the *Times* was careful to insist, entirely apart from the agenda of Lausanne, which require a common approach, the character of those " other European questions " being left unspecified (July 14, 1932). The Pact, announced Herriot to the French Chamber on July 17, is " a pact of mutual confidence concluded in the interests of order." The character of the " order " and " European régime " which thus requires the combination of the Western European Imperialist Powers and the drawing in of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe (Austria has just received a Five-Power loan of £9 millions under the new dispensation) is sufficiently clear.

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The Ottawa Conference

IT is in relation to this developing world situation and the war-crisis that the primary significance of the Ottawa Conference stands out. Public discussion of the Ottawa Conference has turned, above all, on the *internal* relations of Britain and the Dominions, on the conception of " empire economic unity," " closer empire trade," mutual imports and exports, market possibilities, &c. *But it is the external relations of Britain and the Dominions as a grouping that is the decisive question governing the inner economic questions.* The myth of " empire free trade," of " empire economic unity," has long been exposed ; and to-day the propagandists themselves have become very much more subdued and doubtful on the eve of Ottawa. The basic economic contradictions of Britain and the Dominions have been abundantly exposed. The continuous tendency has been to ever greater and more rapid separation, and not to greater union. The Dominions seek increasingly world markets for their production ; the British share in Dominion markets goes steadily down. It is unnecessary to quote the familiar figures of percentages that illustrate this continuous process of disintegration, which every Imperial Conference so far has failed to check. The " imperial preferences " of the Dominions are in fact only the cover for ever higher tariffs against British goods. Beneath the noisy outcry of " Empire patriotism " and " Empire sentiment " on both sides lies barely concealed the greedy conflict of rival sets of traders. The Dominions' producers seek for a monopolist hold on the British market for their food and raw materials. The British manufacturers seek for a protected hold on Dominion markets, which they are losing, not merely to American, Japanese, German and other foreign competition, but principally to the Dominions' manufacturers themselves. Both aims come up against the blind wall of heavy obstacles. British capitalism cannot afford to lose its Argentine, Danish and other sources of supply, which are in fact its principal sources of supply. The Dominions' exporters, even though they had a monopolist hold on the British market,

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could not find scope there for more than half their exports of their principal products, wheat and wool; while in respect of beef, mutton, bacon, butter, oats, barley, fruit, &c., Britain could not obtain more than a fraction of its supplies from the total Empire exports of these. In the field of manufactures, the fight is even more unyielding. The Dominions' industrialists are determined not to yield an inch to British competition. The Lancashire Cotton Delegation to Canada found their negotiations ended in deadlock: their Report declares sadly

> The Canadian manufacturers brushed aside any suggestion that their high protection should be modified in our favour,

and goes on to note the puzzling contrast between the theoretical approval of these interests for Imperial co-operation and

> their reluctance as an organised body to contemplate the slightest diminution in the level of protection they had succeeded in obtaining against the British industry.

BUT all this does not yet bring us to the heart of the question. *It is not correct to assume that, because of this basic conflict of interests, therefore Ottawa must necessarily "fail," as the Imperial Conference of* 1930 *failed.* For there has taken place since then a great development of the world situation, of the advance of the world-crisis to the war-phase, and of the British situation. The drive to the formation of strategic blocs, of war-camps, is now very much stronger. British Imperialism is prepared to make heavy sacrifices in order to strengthen its grip on the Empire. We are reaching a point when *political considerations can govern purely economic considerations.* Note the statement of Baldwin in the preliminary debate on Ottawa, in June:

> We were definitely at the parting of the ways. . . . We had got either to advance in the direction of closer fiscal relationship within the Empire or to drift apart.
>
> (Baldwin, House of Commons, June 16, 1932.)

Note also the statement of the Federation of British Industries in its memorandum for Ottawa (its own statement, not the joint statement of propagandist fudge produced with the signatures of the Trades Union Congress about Ottawa as a "step" to "world recovery"):

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> If the nations of the Empire decide, instead of co-operation, to stand alone, each one of them must eventually fall under the domination of some foreign economic group.

"The domination of some foreign economic group." The reference here to America is obvious (it may be noted that Hoover chose the eve of the opening of the Ottawa Conference to announce in a widely-published speech the conclusion of the United States-Canada Treaty for the St. Lawrence Waterway). This is the unspoken consideration which gives the drive to "closer unity," in spite of all the difficulties.

IN this connection may be noted the statement of the former Editor of the *Times*, Wickham Steed, in an article for the foreign press on the Imperial Conference (the present quotation is re-translated from the *Soir*, July 8, 1932). He brings the Imperial Conference into relation with the Far Eastern war situation, and the consequences of British-French support of Japan and opposition to the American Stimson line.

> The American people, convinced that armed force will be necessary to wipe out Japanese domination in the Far East, will demand a heavy increase of the American Navy. Leaving out of account the new era of armaments which this will open in Europe, the British Government will find itself in a terrible dilemma. It will be condemned to choose between a large increase of the British Navy, to maintain the famous "parity" with the United States, or the abandonment of its naval position in the Pacific. The more the situation develops in the direction of an inevitable conflict between the United States and Japan, the more cruel this dilemma will become; for, while an increase of naval expenditure will threaten the budget balance, the abandonment of the British naval situation in the Far East *would compel Canada, Australia and New Zealand to look for their security by the side of the United States.*
>
> *It is this issue, I believe, which will be discussed between the sessions of the Ottawa Conference, as much as any of the questions on the formal agenda. The feeling that we are moving to a new world war may drive the Dominions to enter into an agreement with Britain on economic and political problems.*

"The feeling that we are moving to a new world war"—that is the driving force which may force some measure of agreement out of all the contradictions.

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THIS does not mean that the contradictions can be solved, or the basic process of disintegration checked. But it does mean that sacrifices may be made to reach a temporary accord. What is most probable is that *Britain will make heavy economic sacrifices in order to win the Dominions for its strategic* (*ultimately for its economic*) *aims*. We have seen this already in the duties and preferences so far introduced. What has been the effect of the Dominions' preferences introduced in the National Government's tariff? Imports from the Empire to Britain have increased. But British exports to the Empire have at the same time decreased. Comparing the first quarter of 1932 with the first quarter of 1931, imports into Britain from the Empire have increased from £63.2 millions to £66.6 millions, or 5 per cent. But British exports to the Empire have decreased from £44.4 millions to £40.4 millions, or 9 per cent. The British adverse balance of trade with the Empire, which stood at £1.3 millions in the first quarter of 1913, and at £10.3 millions in the first quarter of 1930, has now risen from £18.8 millions in the first quarter of 1931 to £26.2 millions in the first quarter of 1932. This is the outcome of the Empire policy of the National Government. The National Government, which has claimed to be fighting to bring down the adverse balance of trade, has in respect of Empire trade heavily increased it. And the same jingo press, which howls at the adverse balance of British trade with the Soviet Union, amounting in fact to £1.1 millions in the first quarter of 1932, applauds the adverse balance of British trade with the Empire, amounting to £26.2 millions in the same period, and calls for the buying of more Empire goods. There could be no clearer demonstration of the imperialist strategic aims masquerading behind the pretence of peaceful economic recovery policies. This process is likely to be carried further at the Ottawa Conference. In return for probably minute and valueless economic "concessions" from the Dominions (but very valuable secret political and strategic pledges of support), the British Government is preparing to clap heavy taxes on wheat and meat (concealed in the quota forms so

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obligingly prepared by the Labour Party for the camouflaging of food taxes) as the price to win and hold the Dominions for the aims of British Imperialism. In other words, *the British workers will be made to pay in dearer food in order to further the war-plans of British Imperialism. That is the real outcome to which Ottawa is driving under a fanfare of "patriotic" sentiment.*

The I.L.P. Conference at Bradford

ANTI-WAR Day, 1932, coincides with the holding of the Special Conference of the Independent Labour Party at Bradford, which is preparing disaffiliation from the Labour Party and setting up as an "independent socialist party." The issues of this conference are dealt with in the article of Comrade Pollitt in the present number; and it will be necessary to return to these issues in the light of the outcome and proceedings of the conference. The new development is a sign of the disillusionment of a growing body of workers with reformism. But the break of the Independent Labour Party with the Labour Party, assuming it to be carried through as intended by the leadership, will not mean a break with reformism. The programme remains, as correctly stated by the Chairman of the Independent Labour Party, "on the basic issues" identical with that of the Labour Party. Despite the undoubted pressure of serious workers from below in the ranks of the party, the move can only be characterised as a *manœuvre* of the left reformist leadership to endeavour to maintain a failing hold on the leftward moving workers ("The reality of the present position was that for years now they had been suffering a constant attrition of members and branches which nothing they had been able to do had the power to check"—General Secretary of the I.L.P. at the Easter Conference, 1932) and keep them from the revolutionary ranks of the International Communist Party. We have here no powerful upsurging movement from below which overthrows the old reformist leadership, and, however confused at first, seeks to forge its way forward in the fight to clearness. On

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the contrary, the entire manœuvre is completely organised and conducted by the old reformist leadership themselves, who have for years been pouring out every kind of reformist lie and filth (Americanism, Fordism, salvation by cheap credit, salvation by a Labour Government, bourgeois pacifism, &c.), and now, when the workers are rising in disgust against all these deceptions, calmly announce, without changing a whit their real basis and propaganda, that they are going to lead the "new" movement and constitute a "revolutionary" "Marxist" party—on a Labour programme. The attempt to find a half-way house between Labourism and Communism can only end in empty phrases. In this respect, the so-called "left" in the Independent Labour Party leadership (Smith, Cullen) have shown themselves in no degree in advance of Maxton-Brockway. If the Bradford Conference decides on disaffiliation, a considerable section of the I.L.P. may remain with the Labour Party, thus constituting a nucleus for the eventual possible "reunion" of the I.L.P. within the Labour Party :

> At least 50 per cent. of the branches in Scotland are opposed to disaffiliation, and some method will be devised to enable them to continue their association with the Labour Movement. . . . They could act as a rallying group to bring the I.L.P. together again, so that the broken alliance with the Labour Party could be repaired.
>
> (P. J. Dollan in *Forward*, July 16, 1932.)

Of those that go out, it is to be hoped that the best serious working class fighters among them will rapidly see through the identity of Maxton-Brockway with the old Labour line and leadership, and find their way to serious revolutionary working class politics in unity with the Communist Party in the united front fight and, finally, find their place in the ranks of the Communist Party, in helping to build up the party of Marxism, of Leninism, and of the working class revolution in Britain.

R. P. D.

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THE BRADFORD I.L.P. CONFERENCE AND AFTER

By HARRY POLLITT

AT the Bradford Conference of the I.L.P., attempts will be made to repeat the old game of the left wing of the reformist Labour Party of trying to deceive the workers into believing that disaffiliation from the Labour Party means a break in the reformist policy of the I.L.P.

It is not the first time that this thunder has been heard ; it will not be the last ; but it takes place at a most critical moment in the history of the working-class movement, when the capitalists are planning greater attacks upon the workers' standards than have ever been attempted before, preparing to launch these at a moment when, in spite of the disorganising rôle of the reformists, the workers in economic struggles, mass demonstrations and battles with the police are slowly building up their fighting united front against hunger and war.

When the Communist Party was fighting for affiliation to the Labour Party, not on the basis of affinity of aims and objective but on the basis of the constitution of the Party at that time, and with the firm intention of carrying out a merciless fight against the whole practice and policy of reformism as expressed both by the Labour Party and the I.L.P., the delegates of the latter Party always used to oppose the fight of the Communist Party for affiliation. Their reasons were in keeping with the tactics of the I.L.P., namely, that once there had been a complete repudiation of any connections between the Labour Party and the Communist Party, once the taint of " Moscow's dictation " had been removed from the Labour Movement, the way was clear for the I.L.P. to come forward as a " real left-wing," conforming to all the traditions of the British working class movement : " no dictation from outside," " no harsh discipline," but a perfectly gentlemanly left-wing that could keep the leftward-moving workers from the Communist Party.

How experience itself has shattered this fond hope ! How the big schemes of " bold policies," of " forward moves," of " sane treatment of purely British issues " carried out in accordance with the " special peculiarities and circumstances of the British Labour Movement " have all revealed themselves in their revolting nakedness !

The I.L.P. has never been a revolutionary opposition inside the Labour Party, but it has suited the politicians of the Labour Party to

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pretend that it has in order to deceive the workers and hold them back from the Communist Party.

Now, with the deepening of the crisis and the sharpening of the attacks on the workers, a growing radicalisation of the workers is taking place, profound discontent is manifesting itself, and this is the moment when the I.L.P. choose to make the break with the Labour Party.

The same I.L.P. that now declares it must break with the Labour Party never made a fight against the Labour Government during its period of office. Did not Maxton himself declare at the Birmingham Conference of the I.L.P. in 1931 that if he had to form another Labour Cabinet it would not be very different from the one that was in power? Did not the I.L.P. urge the workers to return another Labour Government at the last election? And don't they now urge the workers to return a third Labour Government? The Labour Party is not one whit different now from what it was then when it was openly carrying through its line against the working class with all the authority and support of the capitalist class, but the I.L.P. did not break then. And they are not going to break now in the sense of a complete break with the line of reformism.

What they are banking on is that the so-called "break," the sham that they now represent an "independent political force," will give them a bigger backing amongst the workers and will retard the workers finding their way to Communism. Does anyone who knows the Labour Movement believe for a single moment that this tactic is not being carried out with the knowledge and tacit sanction of the Labour Party chiefs?

Look how the game is played. Here is an extract from the call of Maxton and Brockway to the members of the I.L.P. in connection with the Bradford Conference:

> Under these circumstances, no course is open to Socialists who realise the necessity for an uncompromising policy of resistance to the worsening of working class conditions and of decisive change from Capitalism to Socialism, except to break with the Labour Party.
>
> The National Council of the I.L.P. will now proceed to call a special conference at Bradford on July 30 and 31, and will lay proposals before it for the reorganisation of the I.L.P. as a completely independent political force, with a programme and policy appealing to all Socialists who realise the necessity for a break with the past and a new approach to the future.
>
> A. Fenner Brockway
> (*Chairman of the I.L.P.*)
> James Maxton
> (*Chairman of the I.L.P. Parliamentary Group*).

Just note the language used: "a decisive change from Capitalism to Socialism," "the reorganisation of the I.L.P. as a completely independent political force"..."appealing to all Socialists who realise the necessity

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for a break with the past and a new approach to the future," while only a few weeks before, Brockway writes in the *New Leader*, the official organ of the I.L.P., as follows :

> The I.L.P. accepts the objective of the Labour Party—Socialism—and, in general, its programme. There are isolated issues upon which we differ in that programme. But on the major issues we accept it.
>
> —Fenner Brockway (*New Leader*, May 20, 1932).

Talk about three card and confidence tricks, the leaders of the I.L.P. have got them all beat ! But the point we need to stress is that Brockway is right when he says there is complete agreement " on the major issues." What are the " major issues " ? They are the vital questions, for they are : *how will the workers conquer power ? How will they unite in class action now to resist the capitalist offensive ? They are the denial of the workers' revolution, of the workers' dictatorship. They are the denial of every class issue and every aspect of the class struggle that alone can lead to the building up of the workers' strength and power so that through revolution the workers can conquer power, can dispossess the ruling class, can give freedom and independence to the colonial peoples, can, in short, commence the task of building up a free Socialist Britain.*

This is the crux of the question, not the namby-pamby phrases that are the stock-in-trade of the Maxtons and Brockways. The latter writes a pamphlet, called " The Coming Revolution," in which we find such a statement :

> Every sincere pacifist must, therefore, be a Socialist, and cannot be indifferent to a struggle to replace Capitalism by Socialism. His duty is to contribute to the revolution a technique in which the main method will be not armed conflict, but action by the working class to take control over industry in their disciplined strength.

And so one could go on giving quotation after quotation showing that the line of the I.L.P. is that of reformism, having no fundamental differences with the Labour Party, but using cunning language to disguise its real political line and policy.

The trouble that many workers find is to pin this slippery bunch down. Everything under the sun is covered by them ; every week in the *New Leader* the most amazing variety of statements are made by the leaders of the I.L.P. and, as I tried to point out in my recent debate with Brockway, this is no accidental carelessness but a deliberate policy of creating confusion in order to disorganise the workers' fight. When their own members get tired of trying to find out the real meaning of all the talk about a revolutionary policy, no answer is given to their questions. For example, in connection with some of the recent statements of the leaders of his Party regarding the anti-war campaign, a member of the I.L.P. wrote as follows to the *New Leader* :

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REVOLUTIONARY ACTION.

To what lengths are the leaders of the I.L.P. prepared to go? Do they realise that ultimately the only way really to stop war on the Soviet Union is by Civil War against the Home Government, resulting in Workers' States, lending support to the Union? What are their intentions? At present the vaguenesses to action increases in direct proportion to the growth of the "revolutionary tempo."

This is not good enough! As a rank and filer I demand clarity as to the policy to be adopted, I demand, moreover, words whose meaning cannot be misunderstood, not ambiguous phrases that may be interpreted as desired.

—Max Nichols (*New Leader*, July 1, 1932.)

Here are some direct questions asked not by Communists but by their own members. Was an answer given? Was this member clearly told what the policy was, what was meant by the revolutionary phrases that were being so freely used? He was not.

Another trick that is always being worked is that of sham support for the workers in their economic struggles while protesting that these do not go far enough, that what is wanted is a more vigorous drive for Socialism. Typical examples of this are two recent Editorial Notes on the fight of the cotton and railway workers.

I.L.P. AND COTTON.

The I.L.P. must continue to encourage resistance to the cuts and to the tyranny of the employers; but it must also point out to the cotton workers that they are doomed under Capitalism and that a thoroughgoing to Socialism is their only hope.

(Editorial, *New Leader*, July 1, 1932.)

I.L.P. AND RAILWAYMEN.

Whilst we welcome every sign of resistance to worsened conditions, all railwaymen must realise that their only hope lies in the socialisation of transport, in combination with the socialisation of finance, industry, and wealth. The rationalisation of industry should mean shorter working hours and an improvement of conditions. It will not mean that within competitive Capitalism.

(Editorial Notes, *New Leader*, July 8, 1932.)

The building up of the workers' resistance to wage cuts, &c., *is* the fight for Socialism. The fight to develop the unity, power, leadership and organisation that alone can lead to the overthrow of capitalism and the Socialist reorganisation of industry is only possible through the daily class struggles against every phase of the capitalist offensive, and this is completely and deliberately missed out of these leads of the I.L.P.

What does this result in objectively? *It gives the lead to the fighting workers that nothing can be done now, that struggle against daily attacks is useless*, but it is carried out under the cloak of high-sounding phrases about a "a thorough going to Socialism" (whatever that means), giving

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the impression that this magic formula is the way out of the problems confronting the workers, apart entirely from their daily fight and struggles.

Brockway, in his article on "The Coming Revolution" and what should be done, writes :

> How is the struggle to be met? By a series of struggles by one trade union branch after another in isolation, by a united struggle to maintain the present working hours and wages? Both are doomed to failure. (*New Leader*, January, 8 1932.)

What is to be done by the miners living on starvation wages, deprived of the seven-hour day, the railwaymen menaced by the Pooling System, the dockers attacked on conditions that are vital; the millions of unemployed rendered desperate by the Means Test; the cotton workers living under a reign of police terror and incessant attacks by the employers, in face of this lead of the I.L.P.?

Brockway tells them in the same article, where he writes :

> The struggle of the working class must, therefore, be to end capitalism, if there is to be any positive purpose in it.
>
> (*New Leader*, January 8, 1932.)

What does all this amount to? Only the creating of doubt, hesitancy, division of the ranks, disorganisation of the fight, splitting of the workers. This is what it is meant to do, for the vital rôle of reformism is to damp down the fighting spirit of the workers and to prove in deeds to their masters the ruling class that reformism, both its Right, Centre and Left brands, are the chief social support of capitalism.

The working class have to resist every attack that is made upon them; in this they must be actively supported by every other section of the workers. All militant class-conscious workers have the duty to rally such support, to stimulate and encourage such resistance, to develop the leadership and organisational forms of all these partial struggles, for out of them will come the class power and strength, the political consciousness, the knowledge and the conscious aim that through these struggles is being opened up the path for the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

The struggle for Socialism is not something apart from the fight against wage cuts, the Means Test, solidarity with the colonial peoples, the fight against war, &c. It is precisely the carrying forward of these struggles and the building up of the workers' power that alone will make the realisation of the workers' revolution and the workers' dictatorship possible, and there is no other way forward for the working masses. The I.L.P., as the Left Wing of reformism, endeavours to hold the workers back from the partial and decisive fights and is therefore to be branded as the most dangerous enemy within the ranks of the working-class movement, and will become all the more dangerous after the Bradford

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Conference by its attempts to pose as an " independent political force " within the working-class movement.

In their efforts to hide the real meaning of their political line from the working class, the I.L.P. are always talking about " unity." The nauseating appeals of Brockway in his debate with me were an outstanding example of this. Their aim is to create the impression that they want unity because the crisis is sharpening, and what a " pity it is that the advanced workers and parties cannot get together."

But it is an unprincipled unity they are after. While the results of their policy are disorganising the actual struggles of the workers, the I.L.P. leaders call aloud for unity to cover up their daily practice. They " regret that the Communists employ tactics that make it difficult to work with them," they cry to the heavens that the Communists will not drop their criticism of their reformist policy.

The Bradford Conference will be treated to a full dose of this from the Maxtons and Brockways on the one hand, and the Revolutionary Policy Committee of the Cullens and Smiths on the other.

The Communists are not interested in any false and unprincipled unity with the leaders of the I.L.P.

The Communists are interested in building up united front action of all the workers for the purpose of the fight against the capitalist offensive—a united front, not for making clever speeches and shouting about unity, but for action against wage cuts, against the Means Test and imperialist war. The Communist Party declares to all its members that the most urgent task confronting them is the building up of this united action, of stimulating and encouraging the workers' daily struggles, of drawing into this united front every worker, whatever his political associations, who is anxious and eager to fight, of destroying the defeatist illusion that the workers cannot fight back, that there is nothing to do but work for the return of a third Labour Government of " convinced Socialists " like Maxton and Brockway, of showing the workers that they have power, that if they get together in the factories, at the Labour Exchanges and in the Trade Unions, they can resist the attacks of the ruling class. This is the aim of the united front work of the Communist Party.

The argument that in such united front activity as this there must be no criticism of reformism and the reformists is bunkum. How can the fight of the workers be led to-day, without bringing it into conflict with reformism ? Isn't the whole fight of the workers retarded and held back precisely because of the fact that reformism has split the workers' ranks, has paved the way for the present policy of the National Government ?

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Does criticism weaken or strengthen the workers' fight? If we all behave like little gentlemen on a common platform, and only talk about the immediate aims of the united front programme, does that retard or advance the workers' fight?

The greater the understanding of the situation the more simply the issues are put, the more clearly the differences in principle between the workers' organisations are explained, the stronger does the fight of the workers become for the winning of this united front programme. The reason for the workers having to form their united front independently is that the reformist leaders and their policy are the enemies of the working-class struggle against capitalism.

How can any militant worker in a factory or a trade union, advocating the united action of the workers to resist wage cuts, do so unless he shows how and why the trade union leaders declare that "the time is not opportune for struggle," or recalls the lessons of the betrayal of the General Strike or exposes the line of the I.L.P. that sectional struggles are "doomed to failure."

How can a worker advocating united action against the Means Test do so without explaining who appointed the Royal Commission that recommended the Means Test, namely, the Labour Government, or how the I.L.P. made a sham fight against it in Parliament, while recommending the workers to vote for the same Labour gang again at the last General Election?

How can a worker advocating united front action to release the class war prisoners do so without pointing out the record of prosecutions against the workers carried on by the Labour Government both here and in India and the treacherous comments of the I.L.P. on the Communist agitation to support the fight of the Invergordon sailors that led to the prosecution of Allison, Priestley, Shepherd and Paterson?

How can we call for solidarity and help for the Belgian miners who were shot at and bombed without showing how the idol of the Second International, Vandervelde, was sent to Charleroi to beg the strikers not to fight back, but "to be calm and peaceful"?

And so one could go on. If the I.L.P. workers in united front activity point out the differences between their principles and those of the Communist Party, if trade union militants argue that whilst supporting the united front activity they believe that all political parties are wrong, that Parliament is played out, isn't this expression of differences all to the good? Doesn't it lead to animated discussion and interchange of opinions? Doesn't it provoke ideas, suggestions, arguments, varying points of view? Doesn't it put every worker on his mettle? Of course it does, and the curse of the British working-class movement is that there is so little discussion, so little threshing out of the issues.

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The demand of the I.L.P. for no criticism is put forward to sabotage the growing working-class unity that is slowly being built up in every locality.

There should be no illusions as to the future developments within the I.L.P. itself. Bradford does not mean a break with the whole practice and policy of reformism. Later on we shall find that, as the situation develops, doleful laments will be heard about " divisions in the movement," about the need for " getting together again," we shall be treated to large doses of " unity medicine," the present breach will be healed, the I.L.P. and the Labour Party will come together again and the workers be told that all is well once more.

If readers of THE LABOUR MONTHLY doubt this let them recall the situation in 1920 when the Centre parties throughout the international working-class movement came together in the Two-and-a-half International. At Berne in December, 1920, they declared in favour of " world revolution," of " the defence of the Soviet Union," of support " for the revolutionary movements in the East," proclaiming the " union of all revolutionary forces against Imperialism." The Berne Manifesto stated that " the world war has destroyed the Second International," that what was left of it is only " the reformist and nationalist wing of the Second International," that the Second International was only " an element that destroyed the unity of the class proletarian struggles." And in 1921, under the cloak of such high-sounding revolutionary phrases as quoted above, the Centrists formed the Two-and-a-half International.

Two years later, the centrists and the " reformist and the nationalist wing of the Second International " came together at the Hague, they drew up a joint Manifesto in which it was stated :

> It is, however, clear that the goal of a united Socialist Workers' International which is both all-embracing and has a united programme cannot be attained at one stroke ; it can only be the result of long tireless work.

And this was used to pave the way for the Hamburg Congress of June, 1923, where the Second International and the Two-and-a-half International celebrated their reunion in a hall decorated with every national flag in the world, including the old Czarist flag, but no Red Flag anywhere. The marriage was consummated and the bastard of the reunion, the Labour and Socialist International was born.

Everybody knows how, under pressure from the masses in 1920, the I.L.P. applied to the Communist International for answers to certain questions before they could decide whether or not to apply for affiliation. Everybody knows that the trump card of the I.L.P. has been their differences with the Labour Party during the late world war, but one

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will look in vain for any fight, any relentless exposure of the Labour Party during the war by the I.L.P. On the contrary, immediately the war was finished, " let bygones be bygones " becomes the motto, and the I.L.P. leaders, MacDonald and Snowden become the leaders of the Labour Party, together with the " hated " Henderson and Clynes, the War Ministers, in the fight against the Communist International.

These things are mentioned now because the I.L.P., like all the reformists, bank on what they describe as the short memories of the workers. But it is very necessary to remind the workers of these things, because precisely the same type of revolutionary language is again being used to pretend there is a difference between the I.L.P. and the Labour Party.

The judicial separation that is now being staged at Bradford is only a temporary one. Soon the leaders of the Parties concerned will meet in " Judge " Henderson's room behind the Court, a touching reconciliation will take place, the same marital bed will once more be occupied, and the events of 1923, when the Second and the Two-and-a-half Internationals united will be repeated all over again.

The rank-and-file members of the I.L.P., and the rank-and-file delegates to the Bradford Conference should not be deceived by the game that is now being played by their leaders. The gravity of the present situation, the new offensive on the workers now opening, the war stage of the capitalist crisis that has now been reached, demands the greatest drive on our part for the building up of a mighty fighting united front of the working class against Hunger and War, now being undertaken by the Communist Party.

In this urgent and imperative task the members of all working-class organisations can and should take an active part. The development of the mass action of the working class to fight against the capitalist offensive and the disorganising rôle of the reformist leadership, is the only way in which the workers can build up their power, leadership and organisation, that will not only realise their immediate demands, but will lead to the revolutionary solution of the urgent problems of Bread, Work and Peace now confronting the working class.

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THE WAR ON IRELAND

By WILLIAM RUST

A blow delivered against the power of the British imperialist bourgeoisie by a rebellion in Ireland is a hundred times more significant politically than a blow of equal force delivered in Asia or in Africa. The dialectics of history is such that small nations, impotent as independent factors in the struggle against imperialism, act as a ferment, as one of the bacilli helping to bring to the surface the real forces against imperialism, namely, the Socialist proletariat.—LENIN.

THE Irish masses have again raised the banner of revolt against their ancient enemy. Undismayed by past defeats and the threats of renewed violence a tiny state has challenged all the might of British imperialism and awakened an echo of admiration in the masses throughout the world.

No one was more surprised than the imperialist rulers themselves that the peace which they had imposed with such violence should be so rudely disturbed. The Cosgrave clique of imperialist agents had held office for over ten years and a separate parliament based on proportional representation and exercising a control over fiscal policy seemed to satisfy the capitalists' aspirations for independence. The Government boasted of its progressive agricultural policy, its fortunate escape from the world crisis and the great advantages of membership of the British Commonwealth of Nations. This latter point is still the chief argument of the Cosgrave party which has turned Ireland's dependence into a virtue and dreads to think what its fate would be if it did not receive the crumbs which fall from the table of imperialism.

But this pretty picture of a contented Free State did not at all correspond with reality. All of Cosgrave's blarney could not charm away the crisis, and the workers and peasants were singularly indifferent to the joys of equal partnership in the Empire. The toiling masses, especially the vanguard who remained organised all through these years in the Irish Republican Army, knew quite well that the country had been partitioned, that the Irish State was " free " in name only, that imperialist tribute was wrung from them, that industrial development was retarded, and that their standard of living was declining.

Cosgrave tried to teach them otherwise. On the advice of London he tried some of the old Dublin Castle methods of educating the rebels. A Coercion Act was passed, all militant organisations were declared illegal and a tribunal of officers was set up with dictatorial powers. But coercion was no substitute for bread. The mass movement continued to develop.

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The poverty-stricken condition of the Irish Free State is little understood by British workers because the imperialist press always endeavours to give quite a different picture. The poverty of Ireland can best be gauged by the official British figure that Britain's taxable capacity is sixty-six times that of the Free State. Agriculture is the main industry because imperialism has deliberately prevented the growth of industry, cut off the industrial North from the agrarian South and generally kept Ireland as a convenient backyard. The fall in prices has hit the working farmers very severely, there is a real crisis in the countryside. Large numbers of the small farmers simply cannot pay their land annuities to Britain or even the interest on the mortgages held by the banks. Sometimes prices hardly cover costs of transport to the market. Further, the area of ploughed land continues to decline while pastoral land has increased so that supplies of cheap meat could be guaranteed to Britain.

The situation in industry is going from bad to worse. Wages are much lower than in Britain, while the cost of living is 15 per cent. higher. The official Free State figures give a return of 80,000 unemployed out of an employed population of 1,223,000. But of these 648,500 are employed in agriculture and are not covered by unemployment insurance. The number of unemployed far exceeds the official figures. In Northern Ireland 67,000 workers are registered at the Labour Exchanges. It should also be remembered that the poverty of the Irish masses is accentuated by the almost complete falling off of remittances from their relatives in America owing to the economic crisis in that country. Moreover, the yearly emigration of about 30,000 Irish to America and other countries has now ceased, and last year the number of immigrants exceeded the emigrants for the first time.

In this situation it is small wonder that the Irish masses voted heavily against the Cosgrave Government and returned Fianna Fail, the petty bourgeois party which had never been in office and whose leadership was traditionally associated with the struggle against imperialism. The De Valera demand for the abolition of the oath of allegiance to Britain was regarded as a dramatic challenge to imperialism, the demand for the retention of the land annuities in the Free State exchequer appealed especially to the small farmers who hoped that they would directly benefit.

The Fianna Fail party also put forward proposals which appealed to nationalist feeling all over the country. Their plans for improving the conditions of the masses were combined with proposals for strengthening the political and economic independence of the country. Indeed, it is impossible to frame social demands without at the same time facing the issue of freeing the country from the paralysing grip of imperialism. The Fianna Fail party proposed :

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(1) To promote industrial revival by securing the establishment of at least 200 new factories and the employment of 80,000 additional workers.
(2) Erect 40,000 new houses and let them at rents which the average family can pay.
(3) Reduce taxation by rigid economy in all branches of public service.
(4) Improve social legislation, old age pensions, and pensions for widows and orphans.
(5) Direct affairs so as to create a self-supporting nation.

The Fianna Fail programme is clearly not revolutionary, parts of it are quite utopian and the issue of mass struggle against British imperialism is nowhere faced. In practice Fianna Fail is attacking the standards of the toilers and attempting to make a reactionary compromise with Britain. De Valera aspires to a mystic medieval paradise, a happy self-sufficient Ireland based on private ownership and inspired by the Catholic religion.

But the understanding of these facts must not be allowed to blind British workers to the realities of the struggle against Britain which the Irish masses have renewed at a time when a Fianna Fail Government is in the saddle. For various historical reasons the struggle of the Irish masses is chiefly taking the form of a fight against imperialism, although it should be noted that the internal struggle is growing very quickly as the strike figures show. But such is the influence of imperialist ideology in Britain that even many revolutionary workers have completely failed to grasp the meaning of the new movement in Ireland and have been inclined scornfully to ask why the Irish masses are not directly demanding the overthrow of the capitalist system.

Opportunist views of a like nature were also expressed by many "Marxists" at the time of the Easter Rebellion in 1916. Writing in reply to those who condemned the rebellion as a "putsch," Lenin declared :

> Those who wait for a "pure" social revolution will never live to see it. Such a one is merely a revolutionary in words, without understanding the reality of revolution. The Socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything else but an outburst of mass struggle of all malcontents. A section of the petty bourgeoisie and the backward workers will inevitably take part in it—without their participation mass fighting is impossible . . . only in the experience of revolutionary movements, of premature, isolated, scattered and consequently unsuccessful movements do the masses acquire experience, gather strength, discover their real leaders—the Socialist proletariat—and in this way prepare for the general attack in the same way as disjointed strikes, demonstrations—local and national—outbreaks in the army and revolts among the peasantry, &c., prepared for the general attack in 1905.

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In viewing the present situation the outstanding and inspiring fact that every militant British worker should understand is that the Irish masses are again taking up the struggle against imperialism. There may be " Marxists " in Britain who are annoyed because the struggle in Ireland does not fit in with their doctrinaire views. They are too annoyed to notice the stimulating effect of this struggle on the British worker.[1] They do not understand that there can be no advance towards Socialism in Britain if the British workers do not support the fight of the small nations for independence. The British working class will not be able to free itself from capitalist slavery unless it knows how to defeat the capitalists by allying itself with the peoples of the Empire who are fighting for independence.

From the standpoint of the revolutionary working class the present Irish struggle against the " National " Government is a glorious opportunity for pressing home the fight against British capitalism by the double method of supporting Ireland and strengthening the struggle against the capitalist offensive. De Valera is certainly not pursuing a revolutionary policy but far from that fact being an argument for neglecting the anti-imperialist struggle in Britain it is really a reason for strengthening the struggle. The greater the activity of the British workers the more likely is the development of an independent proletarian leadership in Ireland.

British imperialism is attacking the Irish Free State with the ferocity of a despot. The imposition of the 20 per cent. tariff—nominally imposed in order to raise revenue—is really a declaration of economic war and is equivalent to a blockade. The aim is not to raise revenue but to bring the Free State Government to its knees by threatening the country with economic ruin. Trade is coming to a standstill and many of the big stores in Britain have announced that they intend to boycott Irish goods and to obtain their supplies elsewhere. The imperialist press is compelled to admit that trade is being severely hit on both sides of the water, but with an incredible imperialistic chauvinism it boasts that whereas Britain is practically the Free State's only market only a small percentage of British goods are exported to the Free State. Announcements of Free State intentions to place orders on the continent are met with the jeering remark that these cannot be paid for because nobody needs the agricultural products of the Free State.

Such arguments illustrate both the chauvinism and despotism of imperialism. By the use of violence Ireland has been tied to the British market, and now the imperialists use this privileged position in order to bring ruin to Ireland and to prove the disadvantages of being outside the Empire !

[1]Although the response of the British workers is so far ill-expressed there is no denying the significance of the Hyde Park fight with the police on July 20. The police attack on Irish speakers who were speaking in support of De Valera was resisted by a crowd over 5,000 strong.

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The imperialist propaganda explaining the joys of enslavement is never allowed to flag, but the press rarely admits the real reason why a total annual trade between the two countries of £67 millions is being destroyed. The official argument that tariffs mean the raising of revenue in order to obtain the tribute which Ireland refuses to pay has been cancelled out by the admission that the tariffs are prohibitive to trade. Why, then, this economic war over a sum which is not sufficient to build one battleship ?

The question cannot be answered in terms of finance. The answer is to be found in Ireland's geographical position in the sphere of British military and naval strategy. Lloyd George, who imposed the 1921 Treaty on Ireland, has openly declared Ireland must be held as a war base at all costs. Speaking in the House of Commons on June 20, he stated :

> Conditions were introduced into the Treaty making it impossible for anyone to raise a great army in Ireland. Further, we said the ports of Ireland must be open to us for purposes of defence. We had had the experience of the war, when the coasts of Ireland were the deadliest trap for our ships. If the coast of Ireland had then been in the hands of an independent sovereign State we might have been done for and we were not going to take that risk.

This argument strongly appealed to the House of Commons, which greeted it with cheers, but no Irish toiler is likely to see very cogent reasons in the argument that he should submit to oppression and robbery merely because he was unfortunate enough to be born on an island in close geographical proximity to Britain. To the British workers the Lloyd George case is the very self-exposure which discloses the urgency of the joint struggle against imperialism. If the man who said that the last war was " a war to end war " now shows that preparation for the next war is his dominant consideration in present-day political activity it is surely necessary to do everything possible in order to defeat those preparations.

Ireland's struggle is undermining the war plans of British imperialism. There can be no real fight in Britain against the danger of war unless the British workers seize this opportunity and side with the Irish masses in order to strike a blow at the war machine.

Before this article appears De Valera may have made his peace with the " National " Government : his repeated offers of arbitration and the paying in of the land annuities to a suspense account shows that he prefers a legal parliamentary solution of the struggle. But Fianna Fail is no more able than British imperialism to declare that the fight for an Irish Workers' and Peasants' Republic is at an end. Arbitration will help to disorganise the mass struggle, but it will not bring peace and plenty where at present there is hunger and suffering.

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The fight for the Irish Republic is part of the world revolutionary movement; it is flaming up again in the conditions of world crisis. The fight will go forward despite imperialist coercion and the wavering policy of the national reformist leaders in Ireland. But the way in which it goes forward depends to a very large extent on the activity of the British workers who have the class duty and obligation from the standpoint of their own immediate interests to fight unconditionally for all the national demands of the Irish masses. In Britain the cry must go up from every factory, trade union and labour exchange that the workers recognise Ireland as an independent nation and acclaim its right to separate from the Empire. We must condemn the land annuities as a system of undisguised imperialist tribute and fight against all measures of reprisals that the imperialists are employing. We must call for the withdrawal of all British troops and military representatives and demand that the artificial partition of the country be ended. In joint struggle the toilers of both countries can march forward against imperialism and towards a Free Socialist Britain and the Irish Workers' and Peasants' Republic.

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MODERN WEAPONS AND WARFARE

By T. H. WINTRINGHAM

MILITARY technique has developed at a more rapid rate during the past four years than during the four years of the first Great War. But the political conclusions to be drawn from this development are not those usually expressed. This development does not automatically strengthen imperialism. In the struggle against the working class revolution, against the nationalist revolts in colonial or semi-colonial countries, and against Soviet Russia, the imperialists' development of scientific machinery for warfare makes it easier for them to start a war with hopes of success—but not easier to win such a war. The commencement of such a war becomes a matter of confident (but unfounded) optimism, as at Shanghai ; it is also easier for the imperialists, if they so desire, to postpone the actual outbreak of a nationalist revolt, as in India, by a show of overwhelming force. But when the test comes—whether of armoured cars in Peshawar or of tanks in Chapei—the results are not in accord with the expectations of the imperialist Staffs.

When carried beyond a certain point each development of military technique makes the imperialist state weaker as against the enemies stated. This may seem, at first sight, absurd ; surely a new and better weapon strengthens the fighting power of the man who holds it ? Certainly it does, we can answer ; but who holds this weapon ? And does the weapon need, for its use, the obedient service of many other men, some of them outside the armed forces altogether ? New weapons must be judged by two standards : their effect on the process of class differentiation within the armed force in question, and their effect on the dependence of this armed force on the products of a skilled working class. For in the next (or the present) war the decisive factor will be not the potential killing-power but the actual will-power, solidarity and endurance of the opposing forces.

The statement that military technique is developing now more rapidly than under the pressure of war may seem difficult to believe. Advances in technique cannot of course be measured arithmetically. But some of their results can be.

To take first the most modern weapon, the aeroplane. Colonel Seeley stated in Parliament early in 1914 that the average speed of the aeroplanes then in use for military purposes was 65 miles per hour. At the end of 1918 three of the most advanced machines in mass production, the D.H. 9a, the Sopwith " Camel " and the Bristol " Fighter,"

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averaged 125 m.p.h. If the slower long-range bombers were added the average would be lower (the F.E. 2b, capable of 90 m.p.h. if pressed was still in service). But we can take it that the development of technique had added 60 m.p.h. to the fighting speed.

In 1928 there were many types in use in the R.A.F. Five may be taken as typical of all except the slow-bomber. Their speeds were: Fairey III. F, 135 m.p.h.; Westland "Wapiti," 140 m.p.h.; Armstrong-Whitworth "Atlas," 150 m.p.h.; Fairey "Fox," 160 m.p.h.; Bristol "Bulldog," 165 m.p.h.—an average of about 150 m.p.h.

Now for every purpose except long-range bombing, these machines have been replaced as standard by a single type: the Hawker-Rolls Royce machine, known in its various forms as the "Fury" fighter, "Hart" (day bomber), "Audax" (army co-operation), "Nimrod" (fleet fighter), and "Osprey" (fleet reconnaissance). These machines move at 190 to 210 m.p.h.

It will be seen that these four years have only added some 50 m.p.h. to the standard speed. But to add this on to 150 m.p.h. is a much bigger technical achievement than adding 60 on to 65 m.p.h., because the resistance to motion does not increase in proportion to the air speed, but in proportion to the square of that speed.

The weight of bombs that can be carried, and the range and speed of the heavy bombers, show a more rapid increase recently than was the case in war time, though the new machines (Handley-Page, Fairey and Blackburn) are not yet in production on a large scale.

Another example of modern development is seen in the speed of movement of a self-contained battalion of infantry. The mobility of infantry remained at a fixed level for more than two thousand years; only picked troops could equal the marching power of the Roman legions. Then came the development of railways and later of road transport. Railways do not give true mobility, the power to move in any direction; nor do they give the mobility during actual battle that is the vital factor. When they have to be built, as in the Egypt-Palestine campaign, progress is limited to a few miles a day. Road and cross-country transport, on the other hand, gives true mobility. The strategic importance of this form of transport was underlined early in the war, when General Gallieni's taxi-cabs took troops from the Paris area to Von Kluck's flank, during the criticial stage of the battle of the Marne. Its tactical importance was made clear at Cambrai and in the final battles of the War.

This form of transport did not reach full development during the War. It is only since the War that we have seen self-contained units of all arms swung across the map by petrol. And this year the pace of movement for an infantry battalion, the slowest unit of a "mechanised" brigade, was raised at one bound from 15 m.p.h. to 20 m.p.h.

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In the same way the speed of movement of field artillery has been raised from that of the horse-drawn battery, not much faster than Wellington's guns, to that of the " dragon " tractor, capable of 20 m.p.h. or more.

All Territorial brigades of artillery are being completely mechanised during 1932. Mechanisation of this force with six-wheeled tractors began in 1931, and was intended to have spread over three years ; this has now been speeded up and all 220 batteries will have tractors within six months from now. The Army Service Corps and field ambulance units of the Territorial Army have also been mechanised.

In these ways a mobile mechanised force is being prepared. Speed, of course, is not everything : but the fire-power of a division has increased with its mobility. This has occurred mainly through the development of the machine gun as the dominant weapon of the army.

Figures are not available for the exact number of machine guns allotted to a British division now ; and progress is so rapid that they would probably be out of date if available. But it is known that in 1913 a United States division of infantry had 24 machine guns, capable of firing 12,000 shots per minute maximum. In 1930 such a division had 947 machine guns, capable of over 470,000 shots per minute. The maximum potential fire-power of the division (including rifles but excluding artillery) had thus increased by 200 per cent.

Each British battalion has now a machine gun company consisting of 3 machine gun platoons and a light mortar platoon. In addition, there are brigade machine guns, divisional machine guns and light mortars, and the machine guns of the armoured vehicles attached to each division.

From the time of Agincourt until the latter half of the Great War the dominant weapon in warfare could be handled by a single man, and that man could carry in battle all the munitions required in a day's fighting. This weapon—bow, musket, rifle—needed little mechanical skill in handling or maintenance. And even modern rifles could be produced, in 1914, by workshops without a high level of technique ; rifles were made in Persia, Afghanistan and China.

From 1916 the machine gun began, on the Western Front, to replace the rifle as the dominant weapon. (By dominant weapon is meant the principal creator of casualties and principal instrument in imposing the will of one force on another, which is mainly but not entirely done by creating casualties). The machine gun needs considerable mechanical skill in handling and maintenance. It can only be produced by machine tools working to fine limits. It needs the co-operation of several men in a day's fighting, and to maintain full effective use for a day may need four to ten times more ammunition than its crew can themselves carry in attack.

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The fighting round Chapei has shown that the machine gun maintains, or even has increased, its predominance. Chinese machine-gunners were able to maintain themselves in the Woosung forts against attack by all weapons, as the German machine-gunners held the ground at Paschendaele. The Japanese tanks and bombers failed to defeat snipers in the city and machine-gunners in the rice-fields.

The dependence of the machine gun on a continual flow of ammunition, its need for skilled handling and maintenance (even if the gun gets these, the life of a machine gun unit in battle is usually described as " all jam "), its dependence on the micrometer-gauge and first-class metallurgy in manufacture, make this weapon typical of modern technical advance. But it is, of course, not nearly so complicated a piece of engineering as the aeroplane engine, or so dependent on supplies as a tank.

An aeroplane in the air is, for a number of hours, a self-contained military unit. But an aeroplane squadron with its workshops and equipment is a very complex economic group dependent on the steel and engineering industries throughout almost all their range, needing wireless parts, delicate instruments, chemicals (for special fuels, and " dope " for fabrics), benzol from coal, specially-made tyres, light metal alloys, and a dozen other things. If the supply of any of these is held up, the squadron is helpless.

The Navy during the War was so dependent on the highest grade of skill in the making of optical instruments that lenses were bought from Austrian firms (via Holland) for use in the range-finders of the Grand Fleet. Each development in technique spreads wider the net of interdependence, and makes more certain that any working class resistance to war will rapidly cripple the forces of imperialism.

This growing dependence on an uninterrupted flow of munitions, coming not from special workshops but from almost every producing industry in the country, is the first great weakness of the imperialists' modern methods of warfare. The second main weakness is the growth of class differentiation and occasions for conflicts within the armed forces.

One effect of the development of modern technique of warfare is that the competence of commanders in relation to the weapons employed decreases. (Appointment to high command for reasons of seniority and social influence will, of course, continue ; the officer who plays polo will still advance over the head of the officer who " swots " metallurgy.)

At one stage in the war on the Soviet Union and on China, India, &c., this inability of the Command to handle its new weapons will be one of the biggest revolutionising factors at work among the troops. It affects officers as much as men, patriots as much as those with a different outlook. Just as members of the Russian nobility and capitalist class

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turned against Tsarism in March, 1917, for " patriotic " reasons, out of a desire to press forward with the war, so will officers of the next Expeditionary Force kick against cavalry generals, and Camberley staffs who think they are engineers because they can " tune " the engines of sports cars.

Another effect of modern technique is to create a reserve of skilled officers and men who are, in a period of capitalist crisis, without employment at an early age. In the Boer War period the " old soldier " was usually a good soldier. But an old aeroplane pilot is never a good one for fighting purposes. Therefore, a system of " short-service " commissions is employed in the Air Force ; this turns young officers out into the search for civilian jobs at ages between 28 and 35. These young men, after years of unemployment or uncongenial employment, will return to their Force in war-time with enthusiasm. But their experiences will have left a mark, and as the enthusiasm wanes they will be able to realise from their own lives the emptiness of patriotic propaganda.

In other modern technical corps there are either similar short-service schemes or there is a system of gradual " superannuation " for those who are not promoted after certain periods of service.

The number of R.A.F. pilots who are not officers has recently been increased ; a sergeant beat two officers in the display of individual aerobatics at the Hendon Display last month. Developments of this sort lead to a wide disparity in pay and privileges between the ordinary " other ranks " and those who have been lucky enough to pass the tests—physical and social—and become pilots.

It was a grievance among the infantry in the War that they were getting a shilling a day for fighting, while a first-class air mechanic far behind the lines got 4s. a day. This differentiation is increased by each advance in technique, and its effect on fighting efficiency will be seen when the pinch comes.

The physical and mental strain imposed by the new weapons must also be noted. The war strain in a tank or submarine rapidly creates crippling neuroses or otherwise destroys health. War used to be a slow, toilsome pursuit rather like agriculture ; now it is a " speeded-up " industry run at a killing pace. Each individual needs reserves of physical and mental strength to stick it. As capitalist society divides more and more into a class rotted by leisure and luxury and a class embittered by poverty and hunger, the imperialist forces will not find it possible to retain the morale needed.

This is also affected by the fact that the " lumpen-proletariat " and the agricultural workers are no longer the main source for recruits. A better-educated, mechanically adaptable type is needed to handle aircraft,

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vehicles and machine guns. This type is mainly drawn from the industrial proletariat, and particularly from young workers in the engineering trades. The background of the youngsters in the forces now is no longer the farm or the fish-and-chip trade : it is the unemployment exchange, the Bedaux system, the parents out of work, and the chained slavery of the moving " conveyor."

One further effect of modern technique which may seem trivial, but is of great importance, must be mentioned. The " craftsman " in the forces cannot be treated for disciplinary purposes in the same way as the expert rifleman. Wireless is being developed enormously ; most tanks and aircraft are fitted with it, and even machine-gun units are often controlled by portable wireless. The wireless operator or mechanic cannot be given " fatigues " implying any heavy manual work ; these would spoil his fineness of touch when handling small parts and tools and sending keys. Thus the " disciplinary " sergeant-major is prevented from employing his normal minor bullyings, in the case of a few men in each unit : which only shows up their irritating absurdity the more when they are employed on others.

It is difficult to inflict any punishment except stoppage of pay on a skilled mechanic whose services are urgently needed. In an Air Force squadron a " rigger " may be confined to the guard room on a serious charge. A machine crashes in landing ; it must be repaired. The rigger is at once told to " hop it and get on with the job." Each development of specialisation makes more difficult, in this way, the maintenance of arbitrary discipline. And arbitrary discipline is the only sort that can exist in a capitalist force.

These factors increasing class differentiation in the forces will only, of course, be supplementary to the general effect of the capitalist crisis on the working class and petty bourgeoisie, from which the ranks and nine-tenths of the officers are drawn.

There is also a general contradiction in the development of modern warfare ; each improvement in technique, within the limits of expenditure which imperialism can afford, makes the imperialist forces less capable of carrying out a fundamental maxim of war : " combine the strategical offensive with the tactical defensive."

The more highly mechanised and technically developed a force is, the smaller is the percentage of its men that it can put in the firing line, the more sensitive are its lines of communications, and the greater are its difficulties in occupying territory if the population are hostile, possess some arms, and are determined to fight.

The combination of the strategical offensive with the tactical defensive has become more important with the development of the machine gun,

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not less important ; this weapon when stationary (and almost invisible) in defence, with its supplies to hand, is immensely more difficult to destroy than when it is carried forward in attack—even when carried at speed and protected by armour—with its supplies, petrol, &c., stretching out over the battlefields behind it. Tactically, for this reason, the defence —as at Chapei—has great advantages over the attack.

Therefore the aim in warfare, now more than ever, is to move forces into such positions that the opposing forces are compelled to shatter themselves in futile attacks. The campaign of Sedan is the typical example of this strategy ; it was the Germans who advanced, the French who had to attack. But the whole of modern technical development is an attempt to produce an attacking force able to advance at speed against a determined defence. The large army, able to occupy territory effectively and advance over a wide front, and to dispose of its defensive lines in depth, is unequivocally condemned ; the small mobile high-efficiency striking force is the modern Staff's aim.

Modern Formations, a text book issued last year by the British General Staff, lays down that " in the open country, tanks will be the principal arm ; in enclosed country, infantry—but an infantry that has radically changed its form."

This " radical change " is the equipment of infantry with vehicles for transport, their arming with machine guns, &c.

This text-book states optimistically that " the doom of large armies is trebly sealed by the aeroplane, the tank and the possibility of meeting gas."

This text-book is the considered opinion of the new Army Council, the membership of which was changed after the successful development of a completely mechanised force during the experiments on Salisbury Plain. (Out of this governing body of the Army only one member remained ; the others were replaced by officers who had played some part in the development of mechanisation.)

It will be remembered by readers of Winston Churchill's *World Crisis*, that there existed in 1914 another Army Council who believed that the fighting power of reservists was not important, that only the " active army " mattered, and " believed ardently that victory could be compelled from the first moment by a vehement and furious rush upon the foe." This was the French War Council ; its plans were responsible for the French disasters of the first three months of 1914, when the French attacks—" hopeless onslaughts delivered to the strains of the ' Marseillaise ' "—were " hurled back with a slaughter so frightful that it has never yet been comprehended by the world."

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The British reliance on technical equipment for a " vehement and furious rush " is no less mystical and unreal now than was the French reliance on " the offensive spirit " in 1914. Those who are planning to use " tanks as the principal arm " over the six hundred miles that separate Bialystock and Moscow, and the thousand miles between Harbin and Lake Baikal, may feel scornful of the possibilities of opposition. But since their vital lines of communication will be unsafe from the front line to the home factory (and beyond), and since their opponents will show a deplorable inability to realise that the doom of large armies and armed populations is " trebly sealed," their successes may not be so great as they imagine. Pyrrhus, Hannibal, Varus, and Napoleon (in Spain) are remembered for campaigns in which they were technically " invincible," and did in fact win victories—but lost the war.

This view of the inevitable outcome of imperialist war on the Soviet Union does not, of course, lead to an attitude of placid and inactive optimism among those whose aim is the ending of imperialism and therefore of war. Since a principal weakness of imperialist war technique is its dependence on the factory, the struggle for organisation and militant leadership in the factory is a vital front in the struggle against the imperialist war-makers. And since another principal weakness is the immense growth of, and increase in the occasions for, class friction within the armed forces, those who are opposed to imperialism will help to ensure that these forces " see the world "—as it is.

Those who advocate a " pacifist technique of revolution (without explaining how this differs from their usual technique of keeping the working class impotent), point to modern weapons of warfare as making a real revolution impossible.

The weaknesses of imperialist weapons noted above are easier to see when we think of these weapons as turned against men and women of the same nationality as those who work them and work on them. Full treatment of this question requires a separate article. But the main point is clear : this war technique is only strong in so far as it creates fear among the workers, and in so far as the forces are separate from the workers. The I.L.P. is helping the imperialists by keeping alive the legend of their invincibility and by distracting attention from the need for contact between the militant working class and the working class in uniform.

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1914—1932: TO WAR UNDER SOCIAL DEMOCRACY!

By N. C. SODERLAND

I. *Then . . .*

THE War came as the culmination of the contradictions between British and German imperialism. Both Britain, and to a lesser extent, Germany, had passed through a time of considerable industrial prosperity. Britain being first in the field had enjoyed a period of complete supremacy in the world's markets and had had the pick of the sources of raw material. Then the fast-rising industrial power of Germany challenged both these privileges. It burst into flame.

The Socialist Movement (Social Democratic), rising under these conditions, had fashioned itself more and more upon the lines of parties requesting, and receiving, from the imperialist powers participation in the plunder derived from the colonial possessions and from the national imperialist trade policies followed by their Governments. This was the predominant factor which shaped and made them and therefore, most important of all, caused them to be *bound to the imperialisms of their several countries*. For example, the Fabian Society supported the Boer War.

In Germany the Social-Democratic Party was chiefly concerned in abandoning the idea of class-struggle and revolution, and making Marxism respectable in the eyes of the bourgeoisie.

In Britain, where it (the Labour Party) was much less doctrinaire and more empirical in growth, it had become completely saturated with the psychology of Liberal capitalist democracy. This is best witnessed by Bruce Glasier (I.L.P.), when he wrote in 1913: "A thousand votes definitely given for Socialism possess more promise and potency for working class emancipation than ten million working men out on strike. . "

We must remember that it was Liberalism (from whom the Parliamentary Labour Party received its concessions, and under whose influence they were) which was the leader of British imperialism in its struggle against the rising German imperialism.

That the masses had considerably imbibed the ideas of Socialism, class-struggle and international unity of all workers is shown by the period of "industrial unrest" and by the fact that when at the instigation of Lenin the resolution was brought before the Second International

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in 1907, that " Should war none the less break out their duty is to intervene to bring it promptly to an end ; and with all their energies to use the political and economic crises created by the war to raise the populace from its slumbers and to hasten the fall of capitalist domination," the resolution was passed, though in face of considerable opposition ; but as events shewed its adoption was merely to satisfy the masses and to keep their minds at ease.

The final preparations for the world war were deeply hidden, and deeply hidden from the masses the Social-Democrats kept these preparations, until their appearance could no longer be hidden from anyone.

It was not until July 29, 1914, that the International Socialist Bureau gave out that " it is an obligation for the workers of all countries concerned not only to continue, but even to strengthen their demonstrations against war, in favour of peace."

Thus openly the mere ". . . in favour of peace " had been substituted for the 1907 ". . . to hasten the fall of capitalist domination. . . ."

Not until August 2 did Keir Hardie and Henderson jointly issue a manifesto, " Hold vast demonstrations against war in every industrial centre, compel those of the governing class and their press who are eager to commit you to co-operate with Russian despotism to keep silent. . . . Down with the rule of brute force. Down with war." That this was nothing but a cold-blooded move on the part of all sections of the Labour Party as well as of the I.L.P. to retain their hold over the masses in order to serve imperialism is shown by the fact that two days later the Labour Party voted war-credits with an enthusiasm equalled only by the Social-Democrats of Germany in aiding their imperialism.

Whilst the Labour Party and the T.U.C. as a whole supported the war and participated in the War Cabinet, yet a small section of the Socialist Movement maintained a pacifist attitude towards the war and this was reflected in the support given to this section by MacDonald, Snowden and Keir Hardie, who refused to vote for war with the Labour Party.

One country in which there was any important dissension from the war policy was Russia. There the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolshevik), later the Communist Party, led by Lenin, adhered to their 1907 resolution.

It is especially by a comparison of these two oppositions that we can arrive at a correct estimate of the " opposition " of the I.L.P.

The 1907 resolution stated that war could only be fought and abolished by turning imperialist war into class-war, and only by abolishing the causes of war (imperialist economic competition) can war be really fought and prevented. The only real opposition could be the opposition which

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had for its aim, armed struggle " against its own imperialism." Any other type of opposition merely serves the interests of imperialism.

The whole policy of the I.L.P. war opposition was purely the one of non-participation such as expressed in the " No-Conscription Fellowship " and its leaders (I.L.P.) were chiefly concerned in negotiating with the Government for the easing of the lot of those who refused to serve. They did obtain concessions for the conscientious objectors by compromise. An illustration of this is the letter from Philip Snowden, published in the *New Leader* of November 6, 1931, by R. M. Fox, as a reply to a request for help for his brother who was imprisoned for refusing the compromise of army labour at home.

October 10, 1916.

DEAR MADAM,

I really cannot help your son. He has made his choice between civil freedom and remaining under military control and has accepted the latter. . . . By infinite labour and effort we have provided a way of escape for them from military control, and if they will not accept it we cannot help them . . . .

MRS. FOX. PHILIP SNOWDEN.

That was the type of " opposition " of the I.L.P.

It was an " opposition " which was of the greatest value to the War Government by directing the minds of those who opposed the war along the lines of purely pacifist abstention.

Thus there was not the slightest attempt or intention on the part of the I.L.P. to follow the line of using imperialist war for the overthrow of capitalism.

Meantime the future Communist Party in Russia utilised every opportunity to develop imperialist war into civil war and eventually succeeded in establishing a Socialist Republic, thus taking the most gigantic stride forward towards the elimination of imperialist competition and the final abolition of war.

During the period of 1918-20 the Social-Democrats of England and Germany were solely concerned with saving capitalism. In England this attitude is well shown by the words of Dr. Salter (I.L.P.), who wrote in the *Labour Leader* of March 7, 1918 :

> We, the I.L.P., will probably soon be tempted to imitate the Bolsheviks and to join hands with the angry, hungry and disillusioned crowds; determined to overthrow the existing regime. We will probably be invited to lead these crowds. Let us, as Socialists, remember that no victory is permanent which is achieved by the passing passion of the moment.

In its hour of need, Capitalism called upon Social-Democracy to save it, and thus came the manœuvre of a " left-wing " which would, while retaining the old policy, accommodate the masses with revolutionary phrases and so save them for the next imperialist war.

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In Germany the Independent Socialist Party split from the main body, retained the masses, and when the danger had passed led them back to the fold.

II. . . . *and Now*

After the war and the revolutionary crisis there emerged several new developments and re-alignments in Capitalism and in the world generally.

The imperialist powers of Britain, France and Japan made and maintained the League of Nations to secure their hegemony against the U.S.S.R. (Socialism).

The passing of the period of partial stability and the plunging into ever deepening crisis on the one hand ; and the success of the Five-Year Plan and the building of Socialism on the other ; has caused the contradictions between them to become so acute that capitalism can see no solution, save the destruction of Socialism.

Japan, being most acutely pressed by the crisis, makes the first move by war in the East.

Whilst the Communist Party was exposing this attack, protesting, holding mass demonstrations, &c., the I.L.P. contented itself with a few vague references and left the matter to the League.

But as time passed the N.A.C. saw that its rank-and-file was becoming more and more influenced by this agitation and as the zero time for the attack approached, took a greater interest in order to play its part.

When the League stood openly exposed, Brailsford, who for years had deluded the workers with Geneva, at last admitted in the *New Leader*, February 26, that " The League . . . means nothing but the Governments which compose its Council " ; but as for policy, he offered none.

On March 4, 1932, the I.L.P. at last featured the war, and strange it is that they should say " The Japanese Socialists are heroically resisting the war and are facing severe persecution in consequence," when in reality these same " Socialists " were fully supporting the war !

After this the I.L.P. forgot the matter until April 8, when they published a manifesto in which " The National Administrative Council (N.A.C.) of the I.L.P. therefore instructs its branches to take immediate action to exert all pressure on the Trade Unions and the Labour Party to create an effective working class demand for an embargo to be put on credit supplies and on the export of munitions and war materials . . . to Japan, and to demand that the General Council of the T.U.C. shall make it clear to the Government that . . . *the first act of war by Japan against Socialist Russia* (my italics—N.C.S.) will be met in this country by Trade Union action to stop the manufacture and despatch of munitions. . . ."

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Two very important points stand out in this : first, that the N.A.C. call for action only when " *the first act of war* " actually happens. Thus the N.A.C. does not raise its voice to stop munitions leaving this country for Japanese war preparation. The N.A.C. does not believe in mobilising the workers to fight war step by step now while there is yet time, but on the contrary to delay action until war has started, until it is too late.

Secondly, the N.A.C. is content to leave the matter entirely to the T.U.C. and to the Labour Party, who for 2½ years administered the capitalist state as well as any other capitalist party. Still, knowing the militancy of the members, Brockway, in his editorial, did hint at independent action, but the manifesto clearly says that ". . . pressure on the Trade Unions and the Labour Party to create an effective working class demand . . .", not for the rank-and-file on their own.

So radicalised, and so far to the left had many members moved, that the I.L.P. leaders were compelled to organise something more. The " Hands Off Russia " campaign was instituted by the London and Southern Counties Divisional Council with the co-operation, so we read in the *New Leader*, May 27, of the " Peace Army . . . and the Churches and the No More War Movement." Birds of a feather !

Whilst they are making this show of activity and are patronising the U.S.S.R. week by week (whom once they abused), the I.L.P. has further activities to its credit which have a bearing on the situation.

A continual campaign is carried out against the Communist Party, a scurrilious campaign of misrepresentation and falsity, aimed at setting up a wall between the militant I.L.P. workers and the Communist workers.

Why is this done ? Because the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, a fellow party of the Communist Party of Britain in the Communist International, is the heart of the growing Socialism. Because the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is indivisible from the Soviet Union.

These manœuvres of the I.L.P. leadership are but a sham, a trick, to bind the membership to imperialism. Whilst they calm the mind of the membership by praising the U.S.S.R., they fight against it in the person of its Party, the Communist Party. By segregating and dividing the workers they hope to prevent mass struggle now against war ; and by retaining the trust of the membership, to betray it when the time comes, as they did in 1914.

They and the Second International are in agreement with the aims of the counter-revolutionary Mensheviks who plot war against the Soviet Union and Socialism. " Then there was the view of the Russian Mensheviks. . . . They wanted to rally the whole of the working class to Russia's aid ; but not unreservedly. They wished to ask the Soviet

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Government for recognition of the non-Communist Party in Russia. . . ." (" The International and the War Crisis," by A. F. Brockway, *New Leader*, May 27, 1932.)

So Brockway's defence of the U.S.S.R. means support for the exchange of Socialism for the Hell of Social-Democracy that we have in Germany and Britain, or in other words, clearly enough, support for the imperialist attack.

While " left " Social-Democracy gives its support in these devious ways the Right wing more openly voices its agreement, both through its leaders and through its press.

As in pre-war days, Social-Democracy serves its imperialism according to the circumstances.

The I.L.P. members are coming more and more to the view that the only way to stop war is not by appeals to the T.U.C. or the Labour Party, but by a continual day-to-day struggle for the stopping of munitions, by continual agitation, and by mass action of a united working class.

When they do this, they are unconsciously abandoning the aims and policy for which the I.L.P. leaders stand. These leaders do not believe in a day-to-day struggle, but in waiting till war comes. They do not believe in mass action, but in dividing the workers who are to leave action to their leaders. They do not believe in revolution and socialism, but in the capitalism of Social-Democracy (Labour Governments, Mondism, &c.).

Because individuals are becoming revolutionary and radicalised it does not mean that the I.L.P. is becoming revolutionary, even though it shouts phrases and parts from the main body of Social-Democracy, but rather that the individual is *moving away from* the I.L.P. and all it stands for.

Unless these militants are able to realise consciously that they really have nothing in common with the leaders of the I.L.P., they will find that these leaders will bring all their efforts to naught and when the time comes deliver them bound to imperialism.

We must break down all the tricks of the reformist leaders, we must cast aside their cunning manœuvres of disaffiliation and revolutionary policies that remain reformist, and instead unite together with the revolutionary workers relying solely upon the might of working class action to stop war, now, to-day.

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THE STRUGGLES OF THE COTTON WORKERS

By A COTTON WORKER

THE cotton workers have struggled against the rationalisation measures of the cotton employers with a spirit and determination unparalleled in the history of the industry. The struggles over the last few years have taken place in spite of the opposition and defeatist policy of the " full-time officials " of the Textile Unions. The Textile Unions, especially the Weavers, have taken ballot after ballot and the vote has recorded the determination of the cotton workers to resist the attempts of the bosses to worsen and deteriorate their economic position.

Ever since the end of the war our wages have been reduced and the material out of which the cloth has had to be produced has continually become worse and worse. Harder work, lower wages, longer hours, physical exhaustion, all these things the cotton workers have had to suffer in this period of declining Capitalism.

Every time the employers have demanded a reduction in the costs of production, whether wage cuts, more looms, and longer hours, their plea has been that due to foreign competitors, and the low wages of cotton workers in other countries, we must make sacrifices in order to get the cotton industry of Lancashire on its feet. This implies that we workers must suffer the pangs of hunger, while the cotton capitalists reap a handsome profit out of our toil and labour.

Since the betrayal of the General Strike—due to the treachery of the reformist " leaders "—the attacks on the conditions of the cotton workers have intensified a thousand fold. These same " leaders " have created the impression among the workers that strikes under capitalism are of no use in maintaining conditions of labour or preventing wage cuts. They blame the workers for their own treachery. The swindle of the arbitration in 1929, the ignoring of ballot votes against more looms, the expulsion of working class fighters from the Unions by the full-time officials has been a spur to the employers to press on with their attacks. The workers have given the lie to these slanderous accusations by their struggle against more looms at Burnley and wage cuts and longer hours throughout the country.

Through the operation of the Labour Government's Anomalies Bill and the Means Test the employers deem it opportune to terminate the 1919 *agreement which gave the cotton workers the* 48*-hour week and* 30 *per cent. increase in rates of pay to compensate for the reduced hours ; and by a*

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mill-by-mill attack they hope to kill the fighting spirit of weavers, spinners and cardroom workers.

The history of the struggle in the last six months is well enough known (the postponement of ending the 1919 agreements on the weaving side in order to rush through a More-Looms Agreement, the defeat of this plot by the resistance of the workers, the spreading of confusion in the ranks of the weavers by the mixed-up ballot of May, and the postponement thereby of strike action, which had a 4 to 1 majority, at a moment when the mill-by-mill attack was going on most furiously). Therefore it is unnecessary for me to deal with it further in this article. I wish to stress one thing only, that is the way in which the policy of the trade union officials throughout has hindered and held back the workers, who have been eager to end the bad conditions. While the workers have sought to fight, because they knew that only a fight could maintain conditions, the trade union officials have relied upon peace-in-industry and secret diplomacy with the bosses and have tried to stop a fight. This has suited the masters very well indeed.

The employers on their side have pushed forward the attack ruthlessly, mill after mill, while the trade union officials, instead of organising the defence of the workers, have talked and have raised formal complaints about the breach of agreements and treaties by the employers. That is to say, the trade union officials have been a *disorganising factor* in these last months.

One point is very important in the cotton industry at the present time : that is the reduced earnings of the weavers through having to weave bad weft and bad warps through employers buying cheap short staple cotton (thread of cotton) instead of long staple. With bad weft the loom may stop three and four times or more during the weaving of a cop. This compels the weaver to thread the shuttle pretty often when weaving a cop. The shuttle is an instrument for taking the yarn through the threads of the warp in weaving. The effect of warps being made out of twist which has been spun out of low-grade cotton causes the ends in the warp to break continually. This forces the weaver to stop the loom and find the broken ends. The weavers then must tie a piece of twist on end to that which has broken in the warp and draw it through the heald and reed. This in many cases causes bad cloth to be made. The weaver is very often brought into the warehouse and told about the bad cloth he has woven. This may lead to the " sack." Moreover the strain on the eyes by the weaver having continually to gaze at the ends weakens the eyes so much that spectacles have to be obtained. The employer does not buy these. In calculating the costs of production the employer does not include spectacles. This form of rationalisation deteriorates the physical condition of the weavers.

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Seeing that the weaver is paid according to the amount of cloth he weaves in a week, constant stoppage of looms due to poor material reduces earnings. The weavers' earnings are governed by the Uniform List, or piece price list, agreed to by the Weavers' Amalgamation in 1902. All other agreements since 1902 have been percentage increases or decreases as the case may be. The basic rate of pay for weaving is determined by number of ends, reed space, picks per inch and length of cuts. Under these conditions weavers' wages change for the worse week by week without any alteration in the methods of payment. Even many weavers themselves do not understand the methods of calculating their wages. This sometimes leads to the weavers being under-paid. Weavers have to give the looms a thorough cleaning each week. There is no pay for this and I know many a weaver who dreads the coming of Saturday—the cleaning day. Another point: weavers, when they have woven their cuts, have to carry them into the mill warehouse. There is no pay for this either.

These are examples of conditions peculiar to the manufacturing side of the industry. In spinning there are no such difficulties of calculation: nor are there, for the spinners themselves, any prevalence of non-unionism. The spinners themselves are more highly-paid compared to weavers: but on the other hand we have the position of the poorly-paid spinners' assistant, called the piecer. These differences between the preparatory side of the industry and the manufacturing side have never been such as to prevent united action on big issues. On all questions of politics, and especially on general changes in hours of labour or wage-rates, the two sections have been dealt with together. Yet this time the endeavour of the bosses to deal with each section in detail and the postponing of action against spinners, except in a dozen isolated cases, has been accepted by the Spinners' Amalgamation.

In January, 1932, the Spinners' Amalgamation instructed their members in relation to the termination of the 1919 on December 31, 1931, as follows: "May we repeat here for the benefit of members that if they are approached by the management of any firm on this question they should immediately refer them to their local trade union officials, and if the management insist on instituting a longer working week than 48 hours they are empowered to leave work."

That is to say, at a moment when scores of mills have been attacked in weaving and a number in spinning, the Spinners' officials are not on the defensive as they flatter themselves or rather as they try to dupe their members, but are actually in *retreat*.

A true defensive would mean the rallying of all workers, spinners and weavers, all textile trades throughout the country, to defeat the capitalist offensive and to hurl back the war danger which is looming up behind this wages, hours, and speed-up attack.

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KUOMINTANG VERSUS SOVIETS[1]

(Continued)

By A. Y.

Composition and Character of the Red Armies

EVERY man, woman and child in the Soviet districts is a fighter of the Revolution. Aside from the regular Red Armies, whose total ranks do not exceed 151,000 men, there are the Red Guards and Youth Pioneers in every hsien or district under Soviet control. There are the Women's Relief Corps, Intelligence and First Aid Corps. The number of these runs into millions, since there are 50,000,000 people in the Chinese Soviet Republic. They are all part and parcel of the organisation which has been built up for the defence and extension of the Red districts.

The Red Armies work in full co-operation with these local forces. The latter are used as auxiliary corps. They are utilised to harass the White columns, to convey information, to carry supplies and aid to the mobile Red regulars. In time of peace—which is seldom enough—they concentrate on tilling the soil and contributing to the economic development of the areas in which they live. In time of war they are the people who melt from sight before the advancing Whites, reappearing only when the exigencies of the campaign demand it.

The Red Armies are themselves chiefly composed of poor peasants, with a nucleus of the peasant soldiers who fought in the ranks of the revolutionary armies in 1925-27. There is in the ranks of each army a small number of handicraftsmen, and industrial workers who constitute the strongest among the leaders of the ranks. These have been drawn partly from the big cities, and from small industry in the towns, whence they have fled the terror. During the retreat from Changsha in 1930 many workers joined the retiring Red forces and have remained with them ever since. It is estimated that there are not more than 100-200 industrial workers in each of the nine principal Red Armies.

Most of the positions of leadership and administration are held by intellectuals and students. During the last three years many students returned from European universities have made their way into the Red districts where they are now engaged in various activities of a political

[1] Reprinted from the Special Edition of *The China Forum* entitled "Five Years of Kuomintang Reaction," Vol. 1, Nos. 11-12-13, May, 1932. For the first section of this article see the July issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY, page 450.

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and educational nature. Many have associated themselves directly with the Red Armies in various capacities. All join when necessary in the actual fighting.

Thanks to the enemy, the armaments of the Red Armies have steadily increased in number and improved in quality. It is an amazing tribute to the ingenuity and fighting ability of these small, fast-moving bands that they have been able within a period of four years, starting virtually unarmed except with picks and spears and pikes, to have acquired nearly 100,000 rifles and huge stores of ammunition, that they have been able to add to their units machine gun and Lewis gun corps.

The internal organisation of the armies is on a share-and-share basis. Everyone, from the commander down to the buck private, fares alike in matters of accommodation, food and remuneration. As a general rule the material condition of the armies is poor and miserable but the highly-developed morale and steadily increasing political consciousness of the rank-and-file under the influence of constant instruction and growth of literacy, make for easy adaptation to all conditions.

In every company there is a Soldiers' Club. This club takes charge of all food and supply arrangements for the company. It also supervises all cultural activity, educational work and social gatherings. (*China Forum*, January 27, 1932.) The instruction of the rank-and-file in reading and writing has made steady progress, many soldiers who used to be entirely illiterate now finding themselves able to contribute to the wall newspapers which have been introduced.

Each regiment has its committee, made up of delegated representatives of each battalion who govern the affairs of the regiment on a basis of complete equality. Strict military discipline is, of course, observed.

In the infrequent periods of comparative peace, the soldiers of the Red Armies take active part in the tasks of the mass movement organisations and are frequently called upon to help in the work on the farms in return for aid in transportation, feeding and care for the wounded extended to them by the peasants in time of war with the Whites.

Their Present Strength

The nine major Red Armies total 151,000 men; they possess in all about 97,500 rifles and a small number of Lewis and machine guns.

Practically all these units are at present engaged in defending the Soviet districts in their respective areas against a concerted drive from several quarters. The Hupeh forces are fighting the troops of General Liu Hsiang of Szechuen. The Hupeh Provincial Forces defending Wuhan are fighting Kwang's 1st Army and Kung's 16th, both of which have been converging on the Triple Cities, with some Red units less than five miles from the city.

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The main Red forces in South-Eastern Kiangsi have been engaged with the Cantonese troops of Chen Chi-tang, which recently withdrew owing to political squabbles at Canton. A raid was made into Fukien in April which resulted in the capture of Changchow and a threat to Amoy, chief Fukien seaport.

The Chinese Soviet Districts

China's Soviet districts do not occupy a single, continuous geographic unit. They exist in six separate territories divided by narrow corridors which are still held by White forces. Soviet administrations exist in 167 hsien or districts distributed over eight provinces.

Arranged by provinces, the hsien under Soviet control can be distributed as follows: Kiangsi, 70; Hupeh, 50; Honan, 10; Anhwei, 10; Hunan, 10; Fukien, 20; Kwangtung, 4; Chekiang, 3. The population estimates for the total area range in the neighbourhood of 50,000,000, of whom perhaps 70 to 80 per cent. were formerly tenants or entirely landless.

The Land Problem

Since with the establishment of Soviet districts the primary tasks have been the execution of the aims of the agrarian revolution, the problem of land re-distribution comes first on the programme in every Soviet. The principles applied have undergone changes amid debates and difficulties and opposition from well-to-do peasants.

Primarily the line has been to aim for the equal distribution of the land in accordance with the number of members in every family. The Chinese kulaks, however, wanted the land divided according to means of production, such as beasts of burden, farm implements, &c. But under the Soviet law these means of production are also confiscated in conformity with the general rule of confiscation.

This general rule has met with strong opposition from the ranks of the well-to-do peasants. This opposition was organised in anti-Soviet groups (commonly called A. B. groups, Anti-Bolsheviks) who associated themselves with the Reorganisationists or Third Party members (so-called Left-Wingers of the Koumintang). They brought large numbers of middle peasants into their ranks by seeking to induce the Soviets to include the middle peasants in the same programme sought for the well-to-do groups, with the result that a bloc of middle and well-to-do peasants was built up against the Soviets.

In the face of this, the Soviets have pursued the plan to build up a bloc of the poor and lower middle peasants to counteract the reactionary activities of the opposition. In the course of this limited class struggle within the confines of the agrarian revolution, the Soviets succeeded in

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winning over the broad masses of the peasantry with their policy of expulsion of the landed gentry and other reactionary elements. Outright expulsion has proved the best weapon against the active A. B. organisations, against which a long and bitter struggle had to be waged.

Taxes and Banks

All illegal taxes carried over from the old feudal-militarist regime are abolished, together with usurious interest rates, outstanding debts to the landlords and property deeds. In the place of the overwhelming and complicated tax burden, a system of progressive taxation has been introduced, with the major burden resting on the well-to-do peasants, a lighter load on the middle peasants and one lighter still on the lowest strata.

In recent times this plan has been carried over into the realm of trade and commerce with the imposition of a progressive business tax, with the major burden on the richer merchants and the lesser on the small traders. Small and middle trades have the protection of the Soviet regime in the present phase of its development.

During January of the present year, 1932, a Workers' and Peasants' Bank was organised in South Kiangsi with a capital of Mex. $20,000, which is to be enlarged as soon as possible to $100,000. Co-operative trading societies are being established wherever possible and no difficulty is being experienced in disposing of the bank's notes.

Improved Conditions for Peasants and Workers

Only against the background of the fact that prior to the establishment of the Soviet districts nearly 70 per cent. of the masses of the peasantry lived under the yoke of old feudal landlordism and militarist oppression can the true values of the changes effected by the Soviet regimes be fully appreciated.

About 80 per cent. of the land in Kiangsi, for example, was concentrated in the hands of less than 30 per cent. of the population. Tenant-farmers struggled under conditions of bitter slavery, paying rentals and interest that absorbed from 50 to 80 per cent. of the produce they could wring from their meagre plots of land. Add to this the tremendous tax burden imposed by militarists and shifted from the gentry to the peasant masses, and a picture of complete subjection is drawn.

The workers, consisting of agricultural labourers, small handicraftsmen and apprentices, were exploited to the furthest possible limits. Short term employment paid the workers 20 to 30 coppers per day (about ten cents Shanghai currency or two cents gold)... Full time workers were even more poorly paid, earning not more than 20,000 to 80,000 cash per year. (A cash is a fraction of a copper, ranging in various districts from one-tenth to one-two-hundreth.)

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Necessities of life aside from those produceable on the land were virtually non-obtainable for the poor peasants in what are now the Central Soviets districts of Kiangsi. Kerosene, cleaning materials, matches, cloth—even salt—were all imported from other districts. Salt would come in from Hunan and Canton and other items from Hankow and the Yangtsze Valley. In return, rice, bamboo, cheap paper, &c., were exported. All import and export trade was carried on, of course, by the propertied classes.

But the imported goods, because of the tremendously high taxes, sold for prices which frequently exceeded a year's earning capacity of an agricultural labourer or small handicraftsman or poor tenant-farmer. Most of the latter were in a perpetual state of bankruptcy under the yoke of the usurers whose rates would run often from 50 to 100 per cent.

With the establishment of the Soviet regime, all these shackles were shattered. The removal alone of these burdens, before any positive substitution of better conditions took place, constituted an improvement in conditions whose real benefits to the individual worker and tenant-farmer are almost incalculable.

From the very beginning, despite the constant necessity for defence against successive White Drives, slow, tiny, but sure gains began to be registered. Of the confiscation of large landholdings, the abolition of illegal taxes, the elimination of usury and outstanding debts, we have already spoken.

One of the first official acts of the Soviet regime was to prohibit all cultivation of poppies for opium, a burden pressed on the peasants by the militarists because of the tremendous revenue to be derived from the opium traffic. With the slowly progressing re-distribution of land, the establishment of peasant-worker regimes, the building of schools and small beginnings at education, the poor peasantry is slowly being lifted from the rut into which centuries of the feudatory has driven it.

Generally speaking, the improvement of social conditions is a task beset with tremendous obstacles. There are no large industries in the Soviet districts and the trade union movement among such workers as there are is weak and undeveloped. The labour law has been applicable so far on any sizeable scale only in the strictly Soviet enterprises, the small arsenals, printing shops, tobacco factories and mines. In all these the eight-hour working day is strictly observed. Workers under eighteen years of age work only six hours as compared to the former 12 and 14 and 16-hour days.

Whereas in former times apprentices in small industrial enterprises were never paid—indeed, parents had to pay for the jobs!—now apprentices earn $3 monthly for the first year, $4 for the second and $5 for the

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third. In Soviet enterprises they earn $6 in the third year. Apprentices used to be beaten, forbidden to leave the master's premises and otherwise treated as bond-slaves. All this has now been forbidden. Employers who do not obey the rules are publicly exposed and led through the streets with placards tied around their necks proclaiming that they have mistreated their apprentices.

In two Soviet tobacco factories in South Kiangsi workers who formerly earned 25 cents for a twelve-hour day are now earning 40 to 45 cents for an eight-hour day. The first order issued by a newly-arrived Red Army is usually for an increase in wages of all employees, industrial and agricultural. This has a considerable effect on the morale. One glowing report told of an arsenal which formerly repaired three rifles daily but could now repair nine in the same period !

With the beginnings of control exercised over the marketing and exchange of commodities, an appreciable difference is already discernible in the prices of primary products in the Soviet Districts as contrasted to White districts :

Commodity	*Soviet District*	*Non-Soviet District*
Salt	80 coppers per catty (1⅓ lb.)	120 coppers
Oil	70 ,, ,,	150 ,,
Rice	$3 per tan (picul)	$10
Meat	40 coppers per catty	120 ,,

The important fact to register from the viewpoint of the liberated masses of the Soviet districts is not that they have not yet been able to make much positive progress—the struggle against Nature and the Kuomintang is still too keen—but that these millions have broken their chains, are raising their heads, conscious of a new freedom—conscious, indeed, for the first time of the very fact that they exist as human beings ! With energies unloosed and the forces of repression lifted, they are making the smallest beginnings at the forging of a new life and a new world. Their success has so far been necessarily meagre—but the gulf that separates their condition of life from that of the toiling millions still under the yoke of the Reaction is the gulf between masses themselves holding the power to make or mar their destiny—and masses still held in thraldom.

Following the formation of the Chinese Soviet Republic on November 7, 1931, the National Soviet Congress, convened at Juikin, adopted a constitutional programme which covers in broad lines the tasks of the Soviet Government and the machinery provided for their execution. With reference to the tasks of the agrarian revolution, it confirms the law of complete confiscation and redistribution of land with the ultimate objective of its nationalisation.

It provides, through the mechanism of a Workers, Peasants and Soldiers' Congress, for the assumption of worker-peasant control of all

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political power. Every citizen of the Soviet Republic, over sixteen, regardless of sex or nationality, is enfranchised and participates in the selection of delegates to the Congress, who are constantly subject to control. All reactionary elements are excluded. Special emphasis is placed on the proletariat in the representation.

The programme institutes industrial reforms, the 8-hour day, safeguards for health and safety, regulations of minimum living standards, a system of social insurance and relief. It abolishes all illegal taxation and substitutes a single progressive tax.

The Chinese Soviet Republic is committed to the cancellation of all foreign imperialist privileges, of all unequal treaties, and the elimination of foreign forces from Chinese soil. Foreign-owned property is to be confiscated and leased lands taken back unconditionally. Foreign business men, under new treaties, may continue to do business in conformity with the laws of the Soviet administration.

Military service is to be made compulsory for peasants and workers. All forces of reaction within the Soviet terriotory are to be disarmed. Freedom of speech, assembly and association are guaranteed to the toiling masses. Complete emancipation for the female sex is provided for and complete freedom of religious belief established. The Soviet Power will protect no religion, nor provide any with funds and the right to extend anti-religious propaganda is given to all workers and peasants.

All minority nationalities in China are granted the full right of self-determination and can decide whether to join the Soviet Union of China or build their own autonomous states. The Chinese Soviet Power is committed to help these tribes break loose from the oppressive rule of imperialism, the Kuomintang and their own princes and monks. Privilege of refuge in Soviet territory is granted to all revolutionary fighters. Foreigners engaged in labour in the Chinese Soviet districts are granted the same privileges as the Chinese toiling masses possess. Finally, the Soviet Power declares that it stands on the same world revolutionary front with the world proletariat and that it regards the U.S.S.R. as its firm ally.

(*Concluded.*)

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The World of Labour

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BRITAIN

"Labour Monthly" Conference

AT Ashton-under-Lyne in the Co-operative Hall, Hillgate Street, there took place on May 28 last a very successful Conference held under the auspices of the LABOUR MONTHLY. There were over a hundred present; some twenty-five took part in the discussion. The subject was "The War and the Capitalist Offensive." Comrade R. P. Dutt's letter to the London LABOUR MONTHLY Conference in April was distributed to the delegates. The Rev. Etienne Watts acted as chairman and Comrade R. Page Arnot opened the discussion.

Comrade **Arnot** stated that the urgency of the war question is of such a serious nature that there is no separation of it from the Capitalist Offensive.

The whole question of war and the offensive was of particular interest to Lancashire; here in Lancashire a struggle had been going on in connection with the More Looms question, and that struggle was an example to prove that the capitalists consider it necessary to break down the resistance of the working-class as part of their preparation for war. Therefore, our main purpose must be to find some means to carry on the resistance of the working-class against the capitalist offensive as part of our fight against war.

There was an opinion in the minds of certain leaders in the Labour Movement that because the preparations, in connection with war, had extended over nine months there was no danger of war: we must endeavour to remove all doubt as to the urgency of war, for doubts in the mind are a drawback to action.

The seriousness of the crisis is made clear by the utterances of prominent statesmen, Sir Robert Horne had said in effect: "that this form of civilisation may end"; Lloyd George said something similar, for he was: "doubtful if capitalism could continue." Our conclusions to be drawn from these utterances must not be an assumption that capitalism was not prepared, but that they were more ready to meet the question of revolution than the working-class.

It would be to the interest of all Militant Workers to examine very closely Lenin's letter on the Hague Peace Conference, which was published in the April issue, 1932, of the LABOUR MONTHLY. Here Lenin deals with the whole question of combating the war danger.

What have we to do? We must deal with every argument relative to the position of the working-class. We must examine closely the arguments that have been filtered down from the leaders of the Labour Movement. We

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must prove that these arguments are a web of lies, we must tear these lies asunder. We must see to it that the danger of war is fought from every angle. Action must be our keynote.

If we could so organise the workers to demonstrate at the Salford Docks as to stop, even for a short time, a single ship from sailing with munitions to Japan it would be of greater value, and have more effect than all the arguments of the workers' leaders. That would be action! It is in this direction that we must turn in our work against war. We must go to the Trade Union Branches, raise the question of war, show how by mass action we can stop war. In the Cinemas where pictures of Shanghai and Manchuria are being shown, it would be to the interest of the workers to organise their protest by shouting slogans of "Shame!" against the pictures of war.

Above all we must discuss the many problems of the every-day struggles of the working-class. We must examine every means whereby we can face up to the capitalist offensive, we must encourage the workers to take a direct interest in the necessity of rank-and-file activity in the Trade Unions and the workshop.

Amongst those who took part in the discussion Comrade **Watts** said that: In regards to the preparation for war it was common to hear of certain industries that were manufacturing war material for use in the Far East.

We find that certain agreements had been made between the Western Powers and Japan for the division of Chinese territory; Japan was now pressing forward for a materialisation of those agreements; in and around this question of division we found the development of the present war situation. Our task is to counteract the tendencies of the pacifists and to win the masses in the fight against war; also we must expose the rôle of the reactionary Trade Union Leaders. We cannot allow the treachery of the late Labour Government to pass by; our object must be to enlighten the workers upon the failure of the Labour Party and the I.L.P.

Comrade **Martin** said he was concerned with how we could relate the Miners' struggle with the struggles of the Textile Workers. He had come to this conference to see how he could help the workers in the Soviet Union, for during the Miners' Strike the Russian workers responded to the needs of our Miners. He was of the opinion that if we were to do anything at all for the working-class we must do it round organisation of Action and based upon an independent leadership.

Comrade **Len Wincott** described how the struggle of the sailors at Invergordon were related to the workers. He explained that the sailors were not controlled by Trade Union leaders and that their method of conducting their struggle was placed upon a spontaneous rank-and-file basis; it only took two days to discuss and form their committees and rank-and-file leadership, and it was through these committees that the sailors tasted power and became confident in their strength. The significance of this is felt when one realises that the consequences meant the risk of 15 or 20 years' imprisonment, but the sailors did not think of this—they were confident, having tasted power. Methods were thought out and efforts made to break down the resistance of the sailors, but their unity was so solid that it failed; throughout the ranks of the sailors ran the slogan—"Take no Notice! Take no Notice!"

In the past the stability of British Capitalism depended upon the Navy, but through the event of Invergordon capitalism had received a scare that it

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will never forget. To-day capitalism in its decline cannot afford to grant concessions but the revolt of the sailors forced large financial concessions. What they could do could be done by the workers. Had the sailors been aware of the Means Test—there would not have been any Means Test.

Comrade **Shaw**: Speaking as a metal worker and a member of the A.E.U. sent to this conference as a delegate, he wanted to stress the necessity of work inside the Trade Union branches, he wanted to warn the workers that during the last war the whole of the organised official Trade Union Movement became part of the State Machine and was used for the purpose of helping the war. To-day, by the Peace in Industry policy of the Trade Union Congress the trade unions were closer attached to the State Machine than during the period of 1914-1918.

In regards to such conferences of this character he thought that they could be a means towards stimulating an endeavour in the minds of Militants to develop mass action against the capitalist offensive, and he thought that we ought to extend the principle of holding them throughout the country, towards this end he moved the following resolution, which was carried:

> That this Conference considers that a continuation of the discussions, such as we have had here to-day, are of such paramount importance that warrants an extention of the principle to other areas, and it recommends that provisions be made for the convening of a conference in the Manchester District at a convenient date in the future.

Comrade **J. H. Jackson** thought that sufficient attention was not being given to our activities in the trade unions and the Trade Union Congress and organisation at the point of production. In the past we have had many examples of how rank and file activity had forced the whole Labour Movement to act in a leftward direction.

At Scarborough, 1925, the left-wing got the better of the right-wing in carrying by large majorities three important issues, i.e., (1) The resolution against the Dawes Plan; (2) The resolution against Imperialism; (3) The resolution upon Trade Union aims. This last resolution was important, it embodied a policy calling upon Congress to organise for the overthrow of capitalism, also it warned the workers against accepting co-partnership schemes, and most important of all, it influenced Congress to agree that a reorganisation of the Trade Unions upon a workshop committee basis was indispensable as a means to force the capitalists to relinquish their hold upon industry.

In spite of these left-wing victories inside the Congress they were counteracted by the Social Democratic leadership of the General Council. They made no effort to organise for the overthrow of capitalism or the condemnation of the principle of co-partnership, neither did it make any move towards establishing the Trade Unions upon a workshop basis. The activities of the Minority Movement had been very successful in developing the support of a principle, but it had not succeeded in throwing up at the point of production the necessary organisations to force the General Council to act in accordance to the resolutions. This proves that success in passing resolutions in conferences and congress are useless in themselves, we must create first of all, at the point of production, a consolidation of the militant workers into a series of fighting units, these units must be trained, not merely in fighting for a temporary economic need within the framework of the capitalist system but definitely for the overthrow of the system itself as the only real solution of the problems confronting the working-class.

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Comrade **Ainley** thought that it was about time we got down to the items on the agenda, we have already wasted too much time, we must get down to the question of war.

In the schools a war propaganda is being carried out and it affects practically every issue taught in the schools and invariably puts forward capitalist solutions.

There has already taken place a 10 per cent. cut in the wages of the teachers and a feature of outstanding importance in reference to these cuts is the fact that a large number of the teachers are prepared to come out in the streets to demonstrate against the cuts; another feature was the universal silence on Empire Day by the teachers.

A fight against the economy drive is part of the fight against war. We must carry on this fight by demonstrations in the public parks and places, but we must have clarity before action. Through such conferences we can develop interest and out of interest comes understanding, and out of understanding will come the necessary action.

Comrade **Dribbon** referred to the fact that the leaders of the Trade Unions and the Labour Party are asserting that the "Workers will not Fight." Certain tutors in the N.C.L.C., who are workers in Metropolitan-Vickers, had in fact refused to support the delegation of workers to the Soviet Union, and in discussion it was found that they brought forward the argument that even in the economic struggles they could not be sure of getting the support and the backing of the workers in the factories. One of those tutors even stated that he "thought it would be a good thing if war did take place, it might bring things to a head."

He explained that the present rôle of the Second International was exactly as that played by them prior to the last war. He enlarged upon the rôle of Henderson upon his visit to Russia in 1917 and proved how his attitude was in line with the general policy of the Second International which was definitely against the interest of the Soviet Union. He also mentioned how Henderson stood with the Second International in their support of the Georgian Republic (Menshevic). All along the line we found that the Second International allied itself against Soviet Russia.

Comrade **Rush Rhees** could not see the purpose of the question raised in introducing the question of the Second International, he thought that our time could be better spent on the special issues confronting the economic struggles of the workers than upon exposures of the Second International; he certainly had no love for that body but he was of the opinion that if that body had a concrete suggestion, and it generally had not, for anti-war measures to be adopted by the workers then those suggestions should be dealt with. But he did not see the point in spending so much time in an anti-war conference over the past history of the Second International leaders, unless someone brought forward the suggestion that it would be better to leave matters to them. He was not taking up Maxton's plea for a period of peace but believed that the Second International should be exposed and attacked. But is it, for instance, so important to demonstrate that the Second International has been counter-revolutionary in Russia? Really the most important thing to be discussed at this conference was measures against imminent war.

If war develops all the working-class organisations would be crippled if not totally smashed. Any organisations, be they Communist Party, I.L.P. or Trade Union Congress should therefore try to win the support of as many

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workers as possible from other organisations in pushing anti-war measures (such as stopping the shipment of munitions, or organising strikes). He suggested that to this end it would be well to concentrate on the danger of war to the working-class as a whole, and on the necessity for united action against it by all the workers, whatever be their other political differences. These differences may be emphasised in party organs, but it seemed unwise to him in open anti-war meetings designed to win all workers for this action (and not for the policy of the party as a whole), by attacks upon the party from which these workers had come as interested representatives. At such meetings attention should be given to the measures proposed—measures on which workers from all parties may be expected to agree.

Comrade **Arnot** in reply stated that we were only at the beginning of the fight against war. It was clear that all attending the Conference were convinced of the War Danger, but they had to face the two big questions. First, how many of the workers had they yet converted and awakened to a similar burning consciousness of the War danger. Second, how far had that consciousness advanced to the stage of the organisation of action? To both questions their answers could only show a very limited achievement yet. Their propaganda had reached a certain number of Trade Union branches, meetings, &c.; but it had only touched the fringe of the working-class movement. In respect of action they could show no direct results yet for the stopping of the war manœuvres. Munitions were still going, etc. This was a very serious situation. He did not say this as ground for discouragement, but on the contrary in order to awaken the strongest sense in all of the size and urgency of the task.

The question was raised: What was the use of a Conference such as this? Was it not a mere talking shop? Was not the urgent need action, "action now," as one speaker said, and the only question the necessary organising steps, setting up of committees, etc., to prepare action? The impulse behind this criticism, the desire for action, was correct. But the means to action, the conditions of the problem were not understood.

The question of action was not a simple one of organisation. The first necessity was to convince the workers of the urgency of the situation, of the necessity of action. For this, discussion was essential. The task of discussion of propaganda was essential; otherwise any attempt at organisation could only be empty and without results. Further, it was necessary to compare experiences as to methods, as to the views of the workers, conditions for advance, etc., in order to develop the campaign.

One of the principal issues raised was on the rôle of the trade unions in the struggle. The struggle in Lancashire is of such a character that we know that the move forward is not going to be made by the Union Officials. Here in Britain we are accustomed to 100 years of Trade Unions doing things for the workers, and so on. The trouble is that the workers leave the struggle in the hands of the officials. We have got to get down to the problem of influencing the workers to organise independently and to do the work of the struggle themselves.

The trade unions are the main form in which the working class movement has so far developed in Britain. They represent three to four million workers, including the majority of the class-conscious workers. Without revolutionary

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propaganda in the trade unions, the building of a strong revolutionary trade union opposition, the winning of the large body of trade unionists, there can be no winning of the majority of the working class for the revolution.

The building of a revolutionary trade union opposition, on the basis of groups and sections in every union and industry is an obviously necessary task. This is the work which the Minority Movement, the organisation of the revolutionary trade union opposition, is endeavouring to carry out.

The development of the revolutionary trade union opposition is a big step forward. But it is not yet the solution. It does not yet give the field for mobilising and leading the struggle. To this problem there can only be one answer, to which the whole of recent experience leads up.

The united front of the workers for the struggle can only be built up at at the point of the struggle. This was excellently said by several speakers. Where is this ? In the factories and in the workshops, on the basis of the place of work. What does this mean ? It means that the fighting front of the workers can only be effectively built up in the daily struggle at the point of production, where the workers are employed (the fighting front must reach beyond the unemployed to the mass of the employed workers, or fail), on the immediate issues of conflict as they arise, and building up from below towards a common front of elementary immediate demands. This, and not the false combination of opposing programmes, is the real line of unity.

A further big question was raised on the United Front, and particularly in reference to the I.L.P. Comrade Rhees asked the question : If we want the United Front, ought not attacks on the I.L.P. and the Second International to be avoided ; ought not the effort be to find a common ground ? Comrade Rhees deprecated the bringing up of the history of the Second International and the I.L.P., the criticising of their statements, etc. But what is the object of the United Front ? It is to develop the common action of the workers on immediate urgent issues. But if views are put forward which in fact hinder and oppose the common action of the workers, it is necessary to attack those views. Otherwise, the United Front would only be a sham, and not lead to common action. It was only from this point of view that criticism of the I.L.P. and the Second International arose ; i.e., their support of the League of Nations, their support of bourgeois pacifism, their prevention of any action except through the trade union bureaucracy—all were dangerous obstacles preventing and impeding the common action of the workers, and must be eliminated if common action was to be reached. The attacks were only against a corrupt ideology and leadership which sought to hold back and paralyse the workers ; they were not attacks against the workers in the Labour Party and the I.L.P. Therefore, these attacks were not in opposition to the United Front but on the contrary were only made in order to help forward the United Front.

It was not the object of this Conference to throw up new organisations and this Conference was in no sense associated with any such idea.

What have we to do ? It is not enough to talk about strikes being betrayed or not. It is action that is required, and in this direction the Conference had not said enough—let us try to get Comrade Dutt's letter before Trade Union Branches. In case of the Labour Exchanges let us develop an agitation for Rent Strikes and the Feeding of Children.

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BELGIUM

The General Strike in the Mining Area

THE strike of the Belgium miners against the 5 per cent. cut in wages began on July 4 and was called off on July 18 by the reformist leaders, who decided to order the men back to work on the following terms (up to the time of going to press only a small proportion of the workers have returned to work):

(1) No wage cuts until November, when wages will be reviewed again.
(2) No victimisation. All workers to be taken back and a committee of union and employers' nominees to work out a quota scheme for the distribution of work.
(3) Withdrawal of the Bill increasing the duty on wheat.

The strikers' additional demands are:

(1) A living wage.
(2) Cancellation of unemployment cuts, substituting a non-contributory scheme to cover all workers.
(3) A 40-hour week.

Such was the fear of the bosses and the Government that all available troops were mobilised and rushed to the disturbed areas. Mons, Charleroi and Liège were put under martial law, with armoured cars patrolling the streets, bombing planes circling overhead, gendarmerie in steel helmets and fixed bayonets, armed soldiery everywhere, right of street assembly abolished (not more than five were allowed to collect together): 20 were arrested under the very notice to this effect at Charleroi.

Of course, the whole movement was attributed to Communist agitators, particularly as M. Vandervelde, the reformist Socialist leader, was hissed and prevented from continuing a pacificatory speech at Charleroi—strikers threw stones at him *and invited him to come down amongst them*, so furious were they with his remarks. Moreover, though the Socialist Party had decided against a General Strike, the Coal Strike continued more fiercely than ever, and there was every indication of the rank-and-file of the Belgian workers themselves making it into a General Strike.

The District Committee of Belgian Trade Union Federation was subsequently compelled to recognise what was already a fact and to declare a General Strike in the Mining area.

Communist offices in Belgium were raided on July 10. Said the *Times* on July 13: "Arrests of Communists continue in the province of Hainault, where there were grave riots over the week-end. The strikes extended to-day to Liège, to Nivelles, in the province of Brabant, and to Auvelais, in the province of Namur."

"The riots were part of a larger plot," asserted the *Times*. Yet from most accounts, the riots were deliberately provoked by the police and soldiery. The strikers only retaliated—and that vigorously—when attacked. The militant spirit of the impoverished, half-starved Belgian worker was something to marvel at, particularly that of the women. The women are playing a very prominent part in the strike, as the *Herald* admits. At Charleroi, when a body of police savagely attempted to prevent a body of strikers from the Mons region entering the area, and charged into the crowd, they were stoned, mainly by women who marched at the head of the crowd.

There was apprehension, in officialdom, as to the attitude of the soldiery; the bludgeoning and firing was done by the gendarmerie. Many regiments of infantry in the disturbed areas were confined to barracks. At Charleroi, relates *L'Humanité*, on the soldiers' arrival, they were greeted outside the

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station by the massed strikers with, " Long live the soldiers " ! The soldiers turned round. But—they were immediately surrounded by the gendarmerie and quickly escorted to barracks, where they have been confined. And certain regiments sent to Charleroi were actually recalled, stated *L'Humanité*, through fear of fraternisation.

In many area the strikers became masters of the town, roadway and all—in Charleroi, Marchiennes and Dampremy, for instance. At the last place the strikers cut off the electric light. In Mons the roadways were barricaded with telepraph poles and paving stones, and covered with broken glass. The Revolutionary Miners' Union issued a manifesto—to fight against all wage reductions, and during the strike period non-payment of gas, water, electricity and rent, and the setting up of soup kitchens for the strikers.

According to the *Times* (July 14), a motion of confidence in the Belgian Government, in regard to the measures it was taking to end the strike, was carried by 131 votes to 1. Only the Communist deputy voted against ; Labour voted with the forces of reaction or abstained. M. Heyman, Minister of Industry and Labour, announced, on July 13, that at a meeting of the delegates of the colliery owners and the miners—that is, of the National Joint Commission of the Belgian Coal Industry—unanimous agreement had been reached, on the following terms :

(1) Present agreement as to pay not to be altered before October 31.
(2) A Commission to be appointed by the Government to examine the question of the length of the working day and of the division of work among the employed and unemployed.

It was later reported, however, that the rank-and-file of the miners refused—the various regions violently disagreed—to accept such terms. The *Daily Herald* (July 14) whilst proclaiming the agreement " a success from the miners' point of view," remarks that " it is not certain that it has come in time to calm the spirit of unrest throughout Belgium."

The *Times* (July 14) described the meeting of the Miners' Congress as follows :

> The National Congress of Miners met yesterday to consider the agreement entered into by the delegates of the colliery owners and the miners on strike. The sitting was a long and stormy one, the representatives being in open disagreement, and there was much disorder during the whole discussion. *The Socialist leaders appear to have lost all authority over the workers* (our emphasis), whose activities were inspired by the Communists, and the meeting broke up in confusion without taking any decision. The General Council of the Socialist Party will meet again to-morrow to examine the situation in the coalfields, which is still critical on account of lack of unity of action among the leaders.

The General Council of the Socialist Party and the Trade Union Commission held a meeting in Brussels on July 15, at which new questions were raised.

The 20,000 metal workers claimed that the agreement between the colliery proprietors and miners to the effect that wages would not be altered before November 1 should also apply to the metal workers, a reduction of whose pay by 2½ per cent. was due to come into force.

Also the miners asked for guarantees on the part of the owners for the execution of the agreement. Certain delegates of the General Council demanded the release of those arrested during the strike.

The General Council adopted a resolution stating that the miners had obtained satisfaction, but declaring that other bodies of workers, particularly the metal workers, had the right to the same treatment as the miners.

The miners were ordered to resume work on July 18. By July 21 less than 350 had returned to work in the Borinage. Of the 100,000 miners who were on strike all over Belgium very few have returned.

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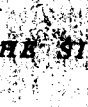
THE SIGN  *OF QUALITY*

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